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DE QUINCEY'S COLLECTED WRITINGS

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

BY

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VOL. XII

TALES AND ROMANCES

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

We now reach the class of De Quincey's writings described in the prospectus of this edition under the collective title of Tales, Romances, and Prose Phantasies. The present volume and the next are devoted to the pretty numerous specimens that have come down to us of De Quincey's faculty in writings of this order. The more ordinary double-title of "Tales and Romances" may suffice, indeed, for the contents of this volume; but something additional is required for the description of the contents of the next, and "Tales, Romances, and Prose Phantasies" may there, accordingly, be the more fitting title.

How much has had to be done for the recovery of the relics of De Quincey's literary industry in the shape of still readable and interesting Tales and Romances will be understood when we announce that more than two-thirds of the bulk of the present volume consists of matter not included in the previous sixteen-volume edition of De Quincey's Collected Writings.

On all grounds, the first place in the volume is due to the romance entitled *Klosterheim, or The Masque.* This romance, a tale of imaginary incidents in Germany in the time of the Thirty Years' War, is certainly the most carefully-written, as well as the most extensive, of all De Quincey's efforts in this kind of prose-fiction, and has the distinction, moreover, of being one of the very few productions of his pen which appeared originally in independent book-form, and not as mere magazine papers. It was first published in 1832 by Messrs. Blackwood of Edinburgh, in a

neat little volume, purporting on the title-page to be "By the English Opium-Eater." Copies of the little volume have long been extremely scarce, so that our present reprint of it will be a novelty even to most of those British readers who are best acquainted with De Quincey. Probably, indeed, it is to the fact that the copyright of the romance was the property of Messrs. Blackwood that we are to attribute its non-inclusion by De Quincey in the collection of his writings in 1853-60, and its consequent disappearance so long from public sight. How far a similar cause may have then prevented the republication of the two tales which follow in the present volume we have no means of knowing. Certain it is that neither the wild tragic tale of English domestic life entitled *The Household Wreck*, which originally appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January 1838, nor the equally wild and still more horrific German story entitled *The Avenger*, which appeared originally in the number of the same magazine for August in the same year, found a place in De Quincey's own fourteen-volume edition. Not till 1871, when Messrs. Black published the second of the supplementary volumes which completed their re-issue of De Quincey's collected writings, was either of the two waifs recalled to notice. The second of the two was reprinted entire in that supplementary volume, but only a selected fragment of the first.

The three tales just mentioned, forming together about three-fifths of the present volume, constitute the *original* portions of its contents (unless indeed we ought to reserve the possibility of some yet unascertained German suggestion for *The Avenger*) ; and the remaining two-fifths consist avowedly of translations from the German.

As regards *The Fatal Marksman* "avowedly" is perhaps the wrong word to use. This short story, especially interesting as being an English version of the German legend used by Weber in his opera of Der Freischütz, was published by De Quincey himself in 1859 in one of the volumes of his Collective Edition, but then without any hint that it was a mere translation from a German original. Naturally enough, therefore, it has passed hitherto as a piece of De Quincey's own writing, though founded on a German

legend. A kind communication received from a correspondent enables us to correct this mistake. De Quincey's *Fatal Marksman*, it obligingly informs us, is from the German of J. A. Apel, and is not the only existing English translation of the original story by that author,—another having appeared, under the title of *Der Freischütz or The Magic Balls*, in a volume of "Tales of the Wild and Wonderful" published in 1825 by Hurst, Robinson, & Co. of London. With the help of the clue so furnished, we have ascertained the following particulars:—In the first volume of the *Gespensterbuch*, or Book of Ghost Stories, published at Leipsig in 1810-14 by Johann August Apel (1771-1816), in conjunction with Friedrich August Schulz, another popular German author of that date, but writing always under the assumed name of Friedrich Laun (1770-1849), there appeared *Der Freischütz*, a story of Apel's, which soon afterwards became immortal by being used by Weber's friend Friedrich Kind for the libretto of Weber's famous opera, first produced in Berlin in 1822. To the popularity of this opera must be due the fact that there were two early translations of Apel's story into English. But De Quincey's translation was earlier by two years than that mentioned by our correspondent; for, having looked by mere accident into an anonymous three-volume collection of "Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations," published in 1823 by Simpkin and Marshall of London, there, to our surprise, in vol. iii, we found De Quincey's *Fatal Marksman*, exactly as we now have it, both title and text, but without the name of either the original author or the translator. The inference is that one of De Quincey's little commercial asides in 1823, when he was at his busiest in writing for the *London Magazine*, was this contribution to a collection of Tales from the German, and that, having a copy of it beside him in 1859, he thought it then worth reprinting just as it stood.

It was in the same year 1823, but in the columns of the *London Magazine* itself, that the three next tales in the present volume made their first appearance,—the comic story entitled *Mr. Schnackenberger; or, Two Masters for one Dog* in the numbers of the magazine for May and June, *The Dice* in that for August, and *The King of Hayti* in that for

November. Only the two latter were reprinted by De Quincey in his Collective Edition; and we have had to recover the first from an old copy of the magazine. "From the German" is all the information respecting them vouchsafed by De Quincey.

With respect to the two remaining tales we are left less in the vague. *The Incognito, or Count Fitz-Hum*,—acknowledged by De Quincey himself, in a note prefixed to it, to be from the German of the above-mentioned Friedrich Schulz, *alias* Laun,—appeared originally, I find, in July 1824, in the fifth number of *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, and was De Quincey's sole contribution to the main series of that somewhat distinguished periodical, the editor and proprietor of which was Mr. Charles Knight, while young Macaulay, young Praed, and other wits and scholars of subsequent celebrity, were among the writers. Despite brilliant promise, the periodical came to an end in its sixth number, just as Mr. Knight had become personally acquainted with De Quincey, and was hoping for further assistance from him. In fact, as Mr. Knight informs us in his autobiography published in 1864 under the title of "Passages of a Working Life during half a Century," De Quincey was one of those who encouraged him in an attempt to resuscitate the defunct magazine, and promised support in case he should do so. The attempt *was* made, it seems, by the publication in the autumn of 1825 of one number more of the interrupted periodical; and to this De Quincey, it seems, did contribute. "He wrote," says Mr. Knight, "a translation of *The Love-*
" *Charm* of Tieck, with a notice of the author. This is not
" reprinted in his Collected Works, though perhaps it is
" the most interesting of his translations from the German."
To Mr. James Hogg belongs the credit of having repaired this defect by a recent reprint of the old article; and our present volume cannot close more appropriately than with De Quincey's fine translation of Tieck's weirdly story and his short appended account of Tieck himself.

D. M.

KLOSTERHEIM, OR THE MASQUE[1]

Chapter I

The winter of 1633 had set in with unusual severity throughout Suabia and Bavaria, though as yet scarcely advanced beyond the first week of November. It was, in fact, at the point when our tale commences, the 8th of that month, or, in our modern computation, the 18th; long after which date it had been customary of late years, under any ordinary state of the weather, to extend the course of military operations, and without much decline of vigour. Latterly, indeed, it had become apparent that entire winter campaigns, without either formal suspensions of hostilities, or even partial relaxations, had entered professedly as a point of policy into the system of warfare which now swept over Germany in full career, threatening soon to convert its vast central provinces—so recently blooming Edens of peace and expanding prosperity—into a howling wilderness; and which had already converted immense tracts into one universal aceldama, or human shambles, reviving to the recollection at every step the extent of past happiness in the endless memorials of its destruction. This innovation upon the old practice of war had been introduced by the Swedish armies, whose northern habits and training had fortunately prepared

[1] This romance, one of De Quincey's very few publications in separate book-form, appeared originally as a prettily printed little volume of 305 pages with this title: "*Klosterheim; or, The Masque. By the English Opium-Eater. William Blackwood, Edinburgh; and T. Cadell, Strand, London. MDCCCXXXII.*" It is included in the American edition of De Quincey, but has never before been reprinted in this country; and copies of the original volume are now very scarce.—M.

them to receive a German winter as a very beneficial exchange; whilst upon the less hardy soldiers from Italy, Spain, and the Southern France, to whom the harsh transition from their own sunny skies had made the very same climate a severe trial of constitution, this change of policy pressed with a hardship that sometimes [1] crippled their exertions.

It was a change, however, not so long settled as to resist the extraordinary circumstances of the weather. So fierce had been the cold for the last fortnight, and so premature, that a pretty confident anticipation had arisen, in all quarters throughout the poor exhausted land, of a general armistice. And as this, once established, would offer a ready opening to some measure of permanent pacification, it could not be surprising that the natural hopefulness of the human heart, long oppressed by gloomy prospects, should open with unusual readiness to the first colourable dawn of happier times. In fact, the reaction in the public spirits was sudden and universal. It happened also that the particular occasion of this change of prospect brought with it a separate pleasure on its own account. Winter, which by its peculiar severity had created the apparent necessity for an armistice, brought many household pleasures in its train—associated immemorially with that season in all northern climates. The cold which had casually opened a path to more distant hopes was also for the present moment a screen between themselves and the enemy's sword. And thus it happened that the same season which held out a not improbable picture of final restoration, however remote, to public happiness, promised them a certain foretaste of this blessing in the immediate security of their homes.

But in the ancient city of Klosterheim it might have been imagined that nobody participated in these feelings. A stir and agitation amongst the citizens had been conspicuous for some days; and on the morning of the 8th, spite of the intense cold, persons of every rank were seen crowding from an early hour to the city walls, and returning homewards at intervals, with anxious and dissatisfied looks. Groups of

[1] Of which there is more than one remarkable instance, to the great dishonour of the French arms, in the records of *her* share in the Thirty Years' War.

both sexes were collected at every corner of the wider streets, keenly debating, or angrily protesting; at one time denouncing vengeance to some great enemy; at another, passionately lamenting some past or half-forgotten calamity, recalled to their thoughts whilst anticipating a similar catastrophe for the present day.

Above all, the great square, upon which the ancient castellated palace or *schloss* opened by one of its fronts, as well as a principal convent of the city, was the resort of many turbulent spirits. Most of these were young men, and amongst them many students of the university. For the war, which had thinned or totally dispersed some of the greatest universities in Germany, under the particular circumstances of its situation had greatly increased that of Klosterheim. Judging by the tone which prevailed, and the random expressions which fell upon the ear at intervals, a stranger might conjecture that it was no empty lamentation over impending evils which occupied this crowd, but some serious preparation for meeting or redressing them. An officer of some distinction had been for some time observing them from the antique portals of the palace. It was probable, however, that little more than their gestures had reached him; for at length he moved nearer, and gradually insinuated himself into the thickest part of the mob, with the air of one who took no further concern in their proceedings than that of simple curiosity. But his martial air and his dress allowed him no means of covering his purpose. With more warning and leisure to arrange his precautions, he might have passed as an indifferent spectator; as it was, his jewel-hilted sabre, the massy gold chain, depending in front from a costly button and loop which secured it half way down his back, and his broad crimson scarf, embroidered in a style of peculiar splendour, announced him as a favoured officer of the Landgrave, whose ambitious pretensions, and tyrannical mode of supporting them, were just now the objects of general abhorrence in Klosterheim. His own appearance did not belie the service which he had adopted. He was a man of stout person, somewhat elegantly formed, in age about three or four and thirty, though perhaps a year or two of his apparent age might be charged upon the

bronzing effects of sun and wind. In bearing and carriage he announced to every eye the mixed carelessness and self-possession of a military training; and, as his features were regular, and remarkably intelligent, he would have been pronounced, on the whole, a man of winning exterior, were it not for the repulsive effect of his eye, in which there was a sinister expression of treachery, and at times a ferocious one of cruelty.

Placed upon their guard by his costume, and the severity of his countenance, those of the lower rank were silent as he moved along, or lowered their voices into whispers and inaudible murmurs. Amongst the students, however, whenever they happened to muster strongly, were many fiery young men, who disdained to temper the expression of their feelings, or to moderate their tone. A large group of these at one corner of the square drew attention upon themselves, as well by the conspicuous station which they occupied upon the steps of a church portico as by the loudness of their voices. Towards them the officer directed his steps; and probably no lover of *scenes* would have had very long to wait for some explosion between parties both equally ready to take offence and careless of giving it; but at that moment, from an opposite angle of the square, was seen approaching a young man in plain clothes, who drew off the universal regard of the mob upon himself, and by the uproar of welcome which saluted him occasioned all other sounds to be stifled. "Long life to our noble leader!"—"Welcome to the good Max!" resounded through the square; "Hail to our noble brother!" was the acclamation of the students. And everybody hastened forward to meet him with an impetuosity which for the moment drew off all attention from the officer: he was left standing by himself on the steps of the church, looking down upon this scene of joyous welcome—the sole spectator who neither fully understood its meaning nor shared in its feelings.

The stranger, who wore in part the antique costume of the university of Klosterheim, except where he still retained underneath a travelling dress, stained with recent marks of the roads and the weather, advanced amongst his friends with an air at once frank, kind, and dignified. He replied

to their greetings in the language of cheerfulness ; but his features expressed anxiety, and his manner was hurried. Whether he had not observed the officer overlooking them, or thought that the importance of the communications which he had to make transcended all common restraints of caution, there was little time to judge ; so it was, at any rate, that, without lowering his voice, he entered abruptly upon his business.

"Friends ! I have seen the accursed Holkerstein ; I have penetrated within his fortress. With my own eyes I have viewed and numbered his vile assassins. They are in strength triple the utmost amount of our friends. Without help from us, our kinsmen are lost. Scarce one of us but will lose a dear friend before three nights are over, should Klosterheim not resolutely do her duty."

"She shall, she shall !" exclaimed a multitude of voices.

"Then, friends, it must be speedily ; never was there more call for sudden resolution. Perhaps before to-morrow's sun shall set the sword of this detested robber will be at their throats. For he has some intelligence (whence I know not, nor how much) of their approach. Neither think that Holkerstein is a man acquainted with any touch of mercy or relenting. Where no ransom is to be had, he is in those circumstances that he will and must deliver himself from the burden of prisoners by a general massacre. Infants even will not be spared."

Many women had by this time flocked to the outer ring of the listening audience. And perhaps for *their* ears in particular it was that the young stranger urged these last circumstances ; adding,

"Will you look down tamely from your city walls upon such another massacre of the innocents as we have once before witnessed ?"

"Cursed be Holkerstein !" said a multitude of voices.

"And cursed be those that openly or secretly support him !" added one of the students, looking earnestly at the officer.

"Amen !" said the officer, in a solemn tone, and looking round him with the aspect of one who will not suppose himself to have been included in the suspicion.

"And, friends, remember this," pursued the popular favourite; "whilst you are discharging the first duties of Christians and brave men to those who are now throwing themselves upon the hospitality of your city, you will also be acquitting yourselves of a great debt to the Emperor."

"Softly, young gentleman, softly," interrupted the officer; "his Serene Highness, my liege lord and yours, governs here, and the Emperor has no part in our allegiance. For debts, what the city owes to the Emperor, she will pay. But men and horses, I take it——"

"Are precisely the coin which the time demands; these will best please the Emperor, and, perhaps, will suit the circumstances of the city. But, leaving the Emperor's rights as a question for lawyers,—you, sir, are a soldier,—I question not, a brave one,—will you advise his Highness the Landgrave to look down from the castle windows upon a vile marauder stripping or murdering the innocent people who are throwing themselves upon the hospitality of this ancient city?"

"Ay, sir, that will I, be you well assured—the Landgrave is my sovereign——"

"Since when? Since Thursday week, I think; for so long it is since your *tertia*[1] first entered Klosterheim. But in that as you will, and if it be a point of honour with you gentlemen Walloons to look on whilst women and children are butchered. For such a purpose no man is *my* sovereign; and, as to the Landgrave in particular——"

"Nor ours, nor ours," shouted a tumult of voices—which drowned the young student's words about the Landgrave, though apparently part of them reached the officer. He looked round in quest of some military comrades who might support him in the *voye du fait* to which, at this point, his passion prompted him. But, seeing none, he exclaimed, "Citizens, press not this matter too far—and you, young man especially, forbear,—you tread upon the brink of treason!"

A shout of derision threw back his words.

"Of treason, I say," he repeated furiously; "and such wild behaviour it is (and I say it with pain) that perhaps

[1] An old Walloon designation for a battalion.

even now is driving his Highness to place your city under martial law."

"Martial law! did you hear that?" ran along from mouth to mouth.

"Martial law, gentlemen, I say; how will you relish the little articles of that code? The Provost-Marshal makes short leave-takings. Two fathom of rope, and any of these pleasant old balconies which I see around me (pointing, as he spoke, to the antique galleries of wood which ran round the middle storeys in the convent of St. Peter), with a confessor, or none, as the Provost's breakfast may chance to allow, have cut short, to my knowledge, the freaks of many a better fellow than any I now see before me."

Saying this, he bowed with a mock solemnity all round to the crowd, which, by this time, had increased in number and violence. Those who were in the outermost circles, and beyond the distinct hearing of what he said, had been discussing with heat the alarming confirmation of their fears in respect to Holkerstein, or listening to the impassioned narrative of a woman, who had already seen one of her sons butchered by this ruffian's people under the walls of the city, and was now anticipating the same fate for her last surviving son and daughter, in case they should happen to be amongst the party now expected from Vienna. She had just recited the tragical circumstances of her son's death, and had worked powerfully upon the sympathizing passions of the crowd, when, suddenly, at a moment so unseasonable for the officer, some imperfect repetition of his words about the Provost-Marshal and the rope passed rapidly from mouth to mouth. It was said that he had threatened every man with instant death at the drum-head who should but speculate on assisting his friends outside, under the heaviest extremities of danger or of outrage. The sarcastic bow, and the inflamed countenance of the officer, were seen by glimpses farther than his words extended. Kindling eyes and lifted arms of many amongst the mob, and chiefly of those on the outside who had heard his words the most imperfectly, proclaimed to such as knew Klosterheim and its temper at this moment the danger in which he stood. Maximilian, the young student, generously forgot his indignation in concern for

his immediate safety. Seizing him by the hand, he exclaimed,—

"Sir, but a moment ago you warned me that I stood on the brink of treason,—look to your own safety at present; for the eyes of some whom I see yonder are dangerous."

"Young gentleman," the other replied contemptuously, "I presume that you are a student; let me counsel you to go back to your books. There you will be in your element. For myself, I am familiar with faces as angry as these—and hands something more formidable. Believe me, I see nobody here," and he affected to speak with imperturbable coolness, but his voice became tremulous with passion, "whom I can even esteem worthy of a soldier's consideration."

"And yet, Colonel von Aremberg, there is at least one man here who has had the honour of commanding men as elevated as yourself." Saying which, he hastily drew from his bosom, where it hung suspended from his neck, a large flat tablet of remarkably beautiful onyx, on one side of which was sculptured a very striking face; but on the other, which he presented to the gaze of the Colonel, was a fine representation of an eagle grovelling on the dust, and beginning to expand its wings—with the single word *Resurgam* by way of motto.

Never was revulsion of feeling so rapidly expressed on any man's countenance. The Colonel looked but once—he caught the image of the bird trailing its pinions in the dust—he heard the word *Resurgam* audibly pronounced—his colour fled—his lips grew livid with passion—and, furiously unsheathing his sword, he sprang, with headlong forgetfulness of time and place, upon his calm antagonist. With the advantage of perfect self-possession, Maximilian found it easy to parry the tempestuous blows of the Colonel; and he would perhaps have found it easy to disarm him. But at this moment the crowd, who had been with great difficulty repressed by the more thoughtful amongst the students, burst through all restraints. In the violent outrage offered to their champion and leader, they saw naturally a full confirmation of the worst impressions they had received as to the Colonel's temper and intention. A number of them rushed forward to execute a summary vengeance; and the foremost amongst these, a mechanic of Klosterheim distinguished for his

Herculean strength, with one blow stretched Von Aremberg on the ground. A savage yell announced the dreadful fate which impended over the fallen officer. And, spite of the generous exertions made for his protection by Maximilian and his brother students, it is probable that at that moment no human interposition could have availed to turn aside the awakened appetite for vengeance, and that he must have perished, but for the accident which at that particular instant of time occurred to draw off the attention of the mob.

A signal gun from a watch-tower, which always in those unhappy times announced the approach of strangers, had been fired about ten minutes before ; but, in the turbulent uproar of the crowd, it had passed unnoticed. Hence it was that, without previous warning to the mob assembled at this point, a mounted courier now sprang into the square at full gallop on his road to the palace, and was suddenly pulled up by the dense masses of human beings.

"News, news!" exclaimed Maximilian ; "tidings of our dear friends from Vienna!" This he said with the generous purpose of diverting the infuriated mob from the unfortunate Von Aremberg, though himself apprehending that the courier had arrived from another quarter. His plan succeeded ; the mob rushed after the horseman, all but two or three of the most sanguinary, who, being now separated from all assistance, were easily drawn off from their prey. The opportunity was eagerly used to carry off the Colonel, stunned and bleeding, within the gates of a Franciscan convent. He was consigned to the medical care of the holy fathers; and Maximilian, with his companions, then hurried away to the chancery of the palace, whither the courier had proceeded with his despatches.

These were interesting in the highest degree. It had been doubted by many, and by others a pretended doubt had been raised to serve the Landgrave's purpose, whether the great cavalcade from Vienna would be likely to reach the entrance of the forest for a week or more. Certain news had now arrived, and was published before it could be stifled, that they and all their baggage, after a prosperous journey so far, would be assembled at that point on this very evening. The courier had left the advanced guard about noonday, with an

escort of four hundred of the Black Yagers from the Imperial Guard, and two hundred of Papenheim's Dragoons, at Waldenhausen, on the very brink of the forest. The main body and rear were expected to reach the same point in four or five hours; and the whole party would then fortify their encampment as much as possible against the night attack which they had too much reason to apprehend.

This was news which, in bringing a respite of forty-eight hours, brought relief to some who had feared that even this very night might present them with the spectacle of their beloved friends engaged in a bloody struggle at the very gates of Klosterheim; for it was the fixed resolution of the Landgrave to suffer no diminution of his own military strength, or of the means for recruiting it hereafter. Men, horses, arms, all alike were rigorously laid under embargo by the existing government of the city; and such was the military power at its disposal, reckoning not merely the numerical strength in troops, but also the power of sweeping the main streets of the town and several of the principal roads outside, that it was become a matter of serious doubt whether the unanimous insurrection of the populace had a chance for making head against the government. But others found not even a momentary comfort in this account. They considered that perhaps Waldenhausen might be the very ground selected for the murderous attack. There was here a solitary post-house, but no town or even village. The forest at this point was just thirty-four miles broad; and, if the bloodiest butchery should be going on under cover of night, no rumour of it could be borne across the forest in time to alarm the many anxious friends who would this night be lying awake in Klosterheim.

A slight circumstance served to barb and point the public distress, which otherwise seemed previously to have reached its utmost height. The courier had brought a large budget of letters to private individuals throughout Klosterheim; many of these were written by children unacquainted with the dreadful catastrophe which threatened them. Most of them had been long separated, by the fury of the war, from their parents. They had assembled, from many different quarters, at Vienna, in order to join what might be called, in Oriental phrase, *the caravan*. Their parents had also, in many in-

stances, from places equally dispersed, assembled at Klosterheim,—and, after great revolutions of fortune, they were now going once more to rejoin each other. Their letters expressed the feelings of hope and affectionate pleasure suitable to the occasion. They retraced the perils they had passed during the twenty-six days of their journey,—the great towns, heaths, and forests they had traversed since leaving the gates of Vienna; and expressed, in the innocent terms of childhood, the pleasure they felt in having come within two stages of the gates of Klosterheim. "In the forest," said they, "there will be no more dangers to pass; no soldiers; nothing worse than wild deer."

Letters written in these terms, contrasted with the mournful realities of the case, sharpened the anguish of fear and suspense throughout the whole city; and Maximilian with his friends, unable to bear the loud expression of the public feelings, separated themselves from the tumultuous crowds, and adjourning to the seclusion of their college rooms, determined to consult, whilst it was yet not too late, whether, in their hopeless situation for openly resisting the Landgrave without causing as much slaughter as they sought to prevent, it might not yet be possible for them to do something in the way of resistance to the bloody purposes of Holkerstein.

Chapter II

The travelling party for whom so much anxiety was felt in Klosterheim had this evening reached Waldenhausen without loss or any violent alarm; and indeed, considering the length of their journey, and the distracted state of the empire, they had hitherto travelled in remarkable security. It was now nearly a month since they had taken their departure from Vienna, at which point considerable numbers had assembled from the adjacent country to take the benefit of their convoy. Some of these they had dropped at different turns in their route, but many more had joined them as they advanced; for in every considerable city they found large accumulations of strangers, driven in for momentary shelter from the storm of war as it spread over one district after another; and many of these were eager to try the chances

of a change, or, upon more considerate grounds, preferred the protection of a place situated like Klosterheim, in a nook as yet unvisited by the scourge of military execution. Hence it happened that, from a party of seven hundred and fifty, with an escort of four hundred Yagers, which was the amount of their numbers on passing through the gates of Vienna, they had gradually swelled into a train of sixteen hundred, including two companies of dragoons who had joined them by the Emperor's orders at one of the fortified posts.

It was felt as a circumstance of noticeable singularity, by most of the party, that, after traversing a large part of Germany without encountering any very imminent peril, they should be first summoned to unusual vigilance, and all the most jealous precautions of fear, at the very termination of their journey. In all parts of their route they had met with columns of troops pursuing their march, and now and then with roving bands of deserters, who were formidable to the unprotected traveller. Some they had overawed by their display of military strength; from others, in the Imperial service, they had received cheerful assistance; and any Swedish corps which rumour had presented as formidable by their numbers they had, with some exertion of forethought and contrivance, constantly evaded, either by a little detour, or by a temporary halt in some place of strength. But now it was universally known that they were probably waylaid by a desperate and remorseless freebooter, who, as he put his own trust exclusively in the sword, allowed nobody to hope for any other shape of deliverance.

Holkerstein, the military robber, was one of the many monstrous growths which had arisen upon the ruins of social order in this long and unhappy war. Drawing to himself all the malcontents of his own neighbourhood, and as many deserters from the regular armies in the centre of Germany as he could tempt to his service by the licence of unlimited pillage, he had rapidly created a respectable force—had possessed himself of various castles in Wirtemberg, within fifty or sixty miles of Klosterheim—had attacked and defeated many parties of regular troops sent out to reduce him—and, by great activity and local knowledge, had raised himself to so much consideration that the terror of his name had spread

even to Vienna ; and the escort of Yagers had been granted by the Imperial government as much on his account as for any more general reason. A lady, who was in some way related to the Emperor's family, and, by those who were in the secret, was reputed to be the Emperor's natural daughter, accompanied the travelling party, with a suite of female attendants. To this lady, who was known by the name of the Countess Paulina, the rest of the company held themselves indebted for their escort ; and hence, as much as for her rank, she was treated with ceremonious respect throughout the journey.

The Lady Paulina travelled with her suite in coaches, drawn by the most powerful artillery horses that could be furnished at the various military posts.[1] On this day she had been in the rear ; and, having been delayed by an accident, she was waited for with some impatience by the rest of the party, the latest of whom had reached Waldenhausen early in the afternoon. It was sunset before her train of coaches arrived ; and, as the danger from Holkerstein commenced about this point, they were immediately applied to the purpose of strengthening their encampment against a night attack, by chaining them, together with all the baggage carts, in a triple line, across the different avenues which seemed most exposed to a charge of cavalry. Many other preparations were made ; the yagers and dragoons made arrangements for mounting with ease on the first alarm ; strong outposts were established ; sentinels posted all round the encampment, who were duly relieved every hour, in consideration of the extreme cold ; and, upon the whole, as many veteran officers were amongst them, the great body of the travellers were now able to apply themselves to the task of preparing their evening refreshments with some degree of comfort ; for the elder part of the company saw that every precaution had been taken, and the younger were not aware of any extraordinary danger.

Waldenhausen had formerly been a considerable village.

[1] Coaches were common in Germany at this time amongst people of rank : at the reinstatement of the Dukes of Mecklenburgh by Gustavus Adolphus, though without much notice, more than fourscore of coaches were assembled.

At present there was no more than one house, surrounded, however, by such a large establishment of barns, stables, and other outhouses, that, at a little distance, it wore the appearance of a tolerable hamlet. Most of the outhouses, in their upper stories, were filled with hay or straw; and there the women and children prepared their couches for the night, as the warmest resorts in so severe a season. The house was furnished in the plainest style of a farmer's; but in other respects it was of a superior order, being roomy and extensive. The best apartment had been reserved for the Lady Paulina and her attendants; one for the officers of most distinction in the escort or amongst the travellers; the rest had been left to the use of the travellers indiscriminately.

In passing through the hall of entrance, Paulina had noticed a man of striking and *farouche* appearance, hair black and matted, eyes keen and wild, and beaming with malicious cunning, who surveyed her as she passed with a mixed look of insolence and curiosity that involuntarily made her shrink. He had been half-reclining carelessly against the wall when she first entered, but rose upright with a sudden motion as she passed him—not probably from any sentiment of respect, but under the first powerful impression of surprise on seeing a young woman of peculiarly splendid figure and impressive beauty under circumstances so little according with what might be supposed her natural pretensions. The dignity of her deportment, and the numbers of her attendants, sufficiently proclaimed the luxurious accommodations which her habits might have taught her to expect; and she was now entering a dwelling which of late years had received few strangers of her sex, and probably none but those of the lowest rank.

"Know your distance, fellow!" exclaimed one of the waiting women angrily, noticing his rude gaze and the effect upon her mistress.

"Good faith, madam, I would that the distance between us were more; it was no prayers of mine, I promise you, that brought upon me a troop of horses to Waldenhausen, enough in one twelve hours to eat me out a margrave's ransom. Light thanks I reckon on from yagers; and the payments of dragoons will pass current for as little in the forest as a lady's frown in Waldenhausen."

"Churl!" said an officer of dragoons, "how know you that our payments are light? The Emperor takes nothing without payment; surely not from such as you. But, *à propos* of ransoms, what now might be Holkerstein's ransom for a farmer's barns stuffed with a three years' crop?"

"How mean you by that, captain? The crop's my own, and never was in worse hands than my own. God send it no worse luck to-day!"

"Come, come, sir, you understand me better than that: nothing at Waldenhausen, I take it, is yours or any man's, unless by licence from Holkerstein. And, when I see so many goodly barns and garners, with their jolly charges of hay and corn, that would feed one of Holkerstein's garrisons through two sieges, I know what to think of him who has saved them scot-free. He that serves a robber must do it on a robber's terms. To such bargains there goes but one word; and that is the robber's. But come, man, I am not thy judge. Only I would have my soldiers on their guard at one of Holkerstein's outposts. And thee, farmer, I would have to remember that an Emperor's grace may yet stand thee in stead, when a robber is past helping thee to a rope."

The soldiers laughed, but took their officer's hint to watch the motions of a man whose immunity from spoil, in circumstances so tempting to a military robber's cupidity, certainly argued some collusion with Holkerstein.

The Lady Paulina had passed on during this dialogue into an inner room, hoping to have found the quiet and the warmth which were now become so needful to her repose. But the antique stove was too much out of repair to be used with benefit; the wood-work was decayed, and admitted currents of cold air; and, above all, from the slightness of the partitions, the noise and tumult in a house occupied by soldiers and travellers proved so incessant that, after taking refreshments with her attendants, she resolved to adjourn for the night to her coach; which afforded much superior resources, both in warmth and in freedom from noise.

The carriage of the Countess was one of those which had been posted at an angle of the encampment, and on that side terminated the line of defences; for a deep mass of wood, which commenced where the carriages ceased, seemed to

present a natural protection on that side against the approach of cavalry ; in reality, from the quantity of tangled roots and the inequalities of the ground, it appeared difficult for a single horseman to advance even a few yards without falling. And upon this side it had been judged sufficient to post a single sentinel.

Assured by the many precautions adopted, and by the cheerful language of the officer on guard, who attended her to the carriage door, Paulina, with one attendant, took her seat in the coach, where she had the means of fencing herself sufficiently from the cold by the weighty robes of minever and ermine which her ample wardrobe afforded; and the large dimensions of the coach enabled her to turn it to the use of a sofa or couch.

Youth and health sleep well; and, with all the means and appliances of the Lady Paulina, wearied besides as she had been with the fatigue of a day's march, performed over roads almost impassable from roughness, there was little reason to think that she would miss the benefit of her natural advantages. Yet sleep failed to come, or came only by fugitive snatches, which presented her with tumultuous dreams—sometimes of the Emperor's court in Vienna, sometimes of the vast succession of troubled scenes and fierce faces that had passed before her since she had quitted that city. At one moment she beheld the travelling equipages and far-stretching array of her own party, with their military escort filing off by torchlight under the gateway of ancient cities; at another, the ruined villages, with their dismantled cottages—doors and windows torn off, walls scorched with fire, and a few gaunt dogs, with a wolf-like ferocity in their bloodshot eyes, prowling about the ruins,—objects that had really so often afflicted her heart. Waking from those distressing spectacles, she would fall into a fitful doze, which presented her with remembrances still more alarming ; bands of fierce deserters, that eyed her travelling party with a savage rapacity which did not confess any powerful sense of inferiority; and in the very fields which they had once cultivated, now silent and tranquil from utter desolation, the mouldering bodies of the unoffending peasants, left unhonoured with the rites of sepulture, in many places from

the mere extermination of the whole rural population of their neighbourhood. To these succeeded a wild chaos of figures, in which the dress and tawny features of Bohemian gipsies conspicuously prevailed, just as she had seen them of late making war on all parties alike; and, in the person of their leader, her fancy suddenly restored to her a vivid resemblance of their suspicious host at their present quarters, and of the malicious gaze with which he had disconcerted her.

A sudden movement of the carriage awakened her, and, by the light of a lamp suspended from a projecting bough of a tree, she beheld, on looking out, the sallow countenance of the very man whose image had so recently infested her dreams. The light being considerably nearer to him than to herself, she could see without being distinctly seen; and, having already heard the very strong presumptions against this man's honesty, which had been urged by the officer, and without reply from the suspected party, she now determined to watch him.

Chapter III

The night was pitch dark, and Paulina felt a momentary terror creep over her as she looked into the massy blackness of the dark alleys which ran up into the woods, forced into deeper shade under the glare of the lamps from the encampment. She now reflected with some alarm that the forest commenced at this point, stretching away (as she had been told) in some directions upwards of fifty miles; and that, if the post occupied by their encampment should be inaccessible on this side to cavalry, it might, however, happen that persons with the worst designs could easily penetrate on foot from the concealments of the forest,—in which case she herself, and the splendid booty of her carriage, might be the first and easiest prey. Even at this moment, the very worst of those atrocious wretches whom the times had produced might be lurking in concealment, with their eyes fastened upon the weak or exposed parts of the encampment, and waiting until midnight should have buried the majority of their wearied party into the profoundest repose, in order then to make a combined and murderous attack. Under

the advantages of sudden surprise and darkness, together with the knowledge which they would not fail to possess of every road and bypath in the woods, it could scarcely be doubted that they might strike a very effectual blow at the Vienna caravan, which had else so nearly completed their journey without loss or memorable privations; — and the knowledge which Holkerstein possessed of the short limits within which his opportunities were now circumscribed would doubtless prompt him to some bold and energetic effort.

Thoughts unwelcome as these Paulina found leisure to pursue, for the ruffian landlord had disappeared almost at the same moment when she first caught a glimpse of him. In the deep silence which succeeded, she could not wean herself from the painful fascination of imagining the very worst possibilities to which their present situation was liable. She imaged to herself the horrors of a *camisade*, as she had often heard it described; she saw, in apprehension, the savage band of confederate butchers, issuing from the profound solitudes of the forest, in white shirts drawn over their armour; she seemed to read the murderous features, lighted up by the gleam of lamps—the stealthy step, and the sudden gleam of sabres; then the yell of assault, the scream of agony, the camp floating with blood; the fury, the vengeance, the pursuit;—all these circumstances of scenes at that time too familiar to Germany passed rapidly before her mind.

But after some time, as the tranquillity continued, her nervous irritation gave way to less agitating but profound sensibilities. Whither was her lover withdrawn from her knowledge? and why? and for how long a time? What an age it seemed since she had last seen him at Vienna! That the service upon which he was employed would prove honourable, she felt assured. But was it dangerous? Alas! in Germany there was none otherwise. Would it soon restore him to her society? And why had he been of late so unaccountably silent? Or again, *had* he been silent? Perhaps his letters had been intercepted,—nothing, in fact, was more common at that time. The rarity was if by any accident a letter reached its destination. From one of the

worst solicitudes incident to such a situation Paulina was, however, delivered by her own nobility of mind, which raised her above the meanness of jealousy. Whatsoever might have happened, or into whatever situations her lover might have been thrown, she felt no fear that the fidelity of his attachment could have wandered or faltered for a moment; —that worst of pangs the Lady Paulina was raised above, equally by her just confidence in herself and in her lover. But yet, though faithful to her, might he not be ill? Might he not be languishing in some one of the many distresses incident to war? Might he not even have perished?

That fear threw her back upon the calamities and horrors of war; and insensibly her thoughts wandered round to the point from which they had started, of her own immediate situation. Again she searched with penetrating eyes the black avenues of the wood, as they lay forced almost into strong relief and palpable substance by the glare of the lamps. Again she fancied to herself the murderous hearts and glaring eyes which even now might be shrouded by the silent masses of forest which stretched before her,—when suddenly a single light shot its rays from what appeared to be a considerable distance in one of the avenues. Paulina's heart beat fast at this alarming spectacle. Immediately after, the light was shaded, or in some way disappeared. But this gave the more reason for terror. It was now clear that human beings were moving in the woods. No public road lay in that direction; nor, in so unpopulous a region, could it be imagined that travellers were likely at that time to be abroad. From their own encampment nobody could have any motive for straying to a distance on so severe a night, and at a time when he would reasonably draw upon himself the danger of being shot by the night guard.

This last consideration reminded Paulina suddenly, as of a very singular circumstance, that the appearance of the light had been followed by no challenge from the sentinel. And then first she remembered that for some time she had ceased to hear the sentinel's step, or the rattle of his bandoleers. Hastily looking along the path, she discovered too certainly that the single sentinel posted on that side of their encamp-

ment was absent from his station. It might have been supposed that he had fallen asleep from the severity of the cold ; but in that case the lantern which he carried attached to his breast would have continued to burn ; whereas all traces of light had vanished from the path which he perambulated. The error was now apparent to Paulina, both in having appointed no more than one sentinel to this quarter, and also in the selection of his beat. There had been frequent instances throughout this war in which by means of a net, such as that carried by the Roman *retiarius* in the contests of the gladiators, and dexterously applied by two persons from behind, a sentinel had been suddenly muffled, gagged, and carried off, without much difficulty. For such a purpose it was clear that the present sentinel's range, lying by the margin of a wood from which his minutest movements could be watched at leisure by those who lay in utter darkness themselves, afforded every possible facility. Paulina scarcely doubted that he had been indeed carried off, in some such way, and not impossibly almost whilst she was looking on.

She would now have called aloud, and have alarmed the camp, — but at the very moment when she let down the glass, the savage landlord reappeared, and, menacing her with a pistol, awed her into silence. He bore upon his head a moderate-sized trunk, or portmanteau, which appeared, by the imperfect light, to be that in which some despatches had been lodged from the Imperial government to different persons in Klosterheim. This had been cut from one of the carriages in her suite ; and her anxiety was great on recollecting that, from some words of the Emperor's, she had reason to believe one at least of the letters which it conveyed to be in some important degree connected with the interests of her lover. Satisfied, however, that he would not find it possible to abscond with so burdensome an article in any direction that could save him from instant pursuit and arrest, she continued to watch for the moment when she might safely raise the alarm. But great was her consternation when she saw a dark figure steal from a thicket, receive the trunk from the other, and instantly retreat into the deepest recesses of the forest.

Her fears now gave way to the imminence of so important a loss; and she endeavoured hastily to open the window of the opposite door. But this had been so effectually barricaded against the cold, that she failed in her purpose, and immediately turning back to the other side she called loudly —"Guard! guard!" The press of carriages, however, at this point, so far deadened her voice that it was some time before the alarm reached the other side of the encampment distinctly enough to direct their motions to her summons. Half a dozen yagers and an officer at length presented themselves; but the landlord had disappeared, she knew not in what direction. Upon explaining the circumstances of the robbery, however, the officer caused his men to light a number of torches and advance into the wood. But the ground was so impracticable in most places, from tangled roots and gnarled stumps of trees, that it was with difficulty they could keep their footing. They were also embarrassed by the crossing shadows from the innumerable boughs above them; and a situation of greater perplexity for effective pursuit it was scarcely possible to imagine. Everywhere they saw alleys, arched high overhead, and resembling the aisles of a cathedral, as much in form as in the perfect darkness which reigned in both at this solemn hour of midnight, stretching away apparently without end, but more and more obscure, until impenetrable blackness terminated the long vista. Now and then a dusky figure was seen to cross at some distance; but these were probably deer; and, when loudly challenged by the yagers, no sound replied but the vast echoes of the forest. Between these interminable alleys, which radiated as from a centre at this point, there were generally thickets interposed. Sometimes the wood was more open, and clear of all undergrowth—shrubs, thorns, or brambles—for a considerable distance, so that a single file of horsemen might have penetrated for perhaps half a mile; but belts of thicket continually checked their progress, and obliged them to seek their way back to some one of the long vistas which traversed the woods between the frontiers of Suabia and Bavaria.

In this perplexity of paths, the officer halted his party to consider of his further course. At this moment one of

the yagers protested that he had seen a man's hat and face rise above a thicket of bushes, apparently not more than 150 yards from their own position. Upon that the party were ordered to advance a little, and to throw in a volley, as nearly as could be judged, into the very spot pointed out by the soldier. It seemed that he had not been mistaken; for a loud laugh of derision rose immediately a little to the left of the bushes. The laughter swelled upon the silence of the night, and in the next moment was taken up by another on the right, which again was echoed by a third on the rear. Peal after peal of tumultuous and scornful laughter resounded from the remoter solitudes of the forest; and the officer stood aghast to hear this proclamation of defiance from a multitude of enemies, where he had anticipated no more than the very party engaged in the robbery.

To advance in pursuit seemed now both useless and dangerous. The laughter had probably been designed expressly to distract his choice of road at a time when the darkness and intricacies of the ground had already made it sufficiently indeterminate. In which direction, out of so many whence he had heard the sounds, a pursuit could be instituted with any chance of being effectual, seemed now as hopeless a subject of deliberation as it was possible to imagine. Still, as he had been made aware of the great importance attached to the trunk, which might very probably contain despatches interesting to the welfare of Klosterheim and the whole surrounding territory, he felt grieved to retire without some further attempt for its recovery. And he stood for a few moments irresolutely debating with himself, or listening to the opinions of his men.

His irresolution was very abruptly terminated. All at once, upon the main road from Klosterheim, at an angle about half a mile ahead where it first wheeled into sight from Waldenhausen, a heavy thundering trot was heard ringing from the frozen road, as of a regular body of cavalry advancing rapidly upon their encampment. There was no time to be lost; the officer instantly withdrew his yagers from the wood, posted a strong guard at the wood side, sounded the alarm throughout the camp, agreeably to the system of signals previously concerted, mounted about thirty

men, whose horses and themselves were kept in perfect equipment during each of the night watches, and then, advancing to the head of the barriers, prepared to receive the party of strangers in whatever character they should happen to present themselves.

All this had been done with so much promptitude and decision that, on reaching the barriers, the officer found the strangers not yet come up. In fact, they had halted at a strong outpost about a quarter of a mile in advance of Waldenhausen ; and, though one or two patrollers came dropping in from byroads on the forest heath, who reported them as enemies, from the indistinct view they had caught of their equipments, it had already become doubtful from their movements whether they would really prove so.

Two of their party were now descried upon the road, and nearly close up with the gates of Waldenhausen ; they were accompanied by several of the guard from the outpost ; and, immediately on being hailed, they exclaimed, "Friends, and from Klosterheim !"

He who spoke was a young cavalier, magnificent alike in his person, dress, and style of his appointments. He was superbly mounted, wore the decorations of a major-general in the Imperial service, and scarcely needed the explanations which he gave to exonerate himself from the suspicion of being a leader of robbers under Holkerstein. Fortunately enough also, at a period when officers of the most distinguished merit were too often unfaithful to their engagements, or passed with so much levity from service to service as to justify an indiscriminate jealousy of all who were not in the public eye, it happened that the officer of the watch, formerly, when mounting guard at the Imperial palace, had been familiar with the personal appearance of the cavalier, and could speak of his own knowledge to the favour which he had enjoyed at the Emperor's court. After short explanations, therefore, he was admitted, and thankfully welcomed in the camp ; and the officer of the guard departed to receive with honour the generous volunteers at the outpost.

Meantime, the alarm, which was general throughout the camp, had assembled all the women to one quarter, where a circle of carriages had been formed for their protection. In

their centre, distinguished by her height and beauty, stood the Lady Paulina, dispensing assistance from her wardrobe to any who were suffering from cold under this sudden summons to the night air, and animating others, who were more than usually depressed, by the aids of consolation and of cheerful prospects. She had just turned her face away from the passage by which this little sanctuary communicated with the rest of the camp, and was in the act of giving directions to one of her attendants, when suddenly a well-known voice fell upon her ear. It was the voice of the stranger cavalier, whose natural gallantry had prompted him immediately to relieve the alarm which, unavoidably, he had himself created; in a few words, he was explaining to the assembled females of the camp in what character, and with how many companions, he had come. But a shriek from Paulina interrupted him. Involuntarily she held out her open arms, and involuntarily she exclaimed, "Dearest Maximilian!" On his part, the young cavalier, for a moment or two at first, was almost deprived of speech by astonishment and excess of pleasure. Bounding forward, hardly conscious of those who surrounded them, with a rapture of faithful love he caught the noble young beauty into his arms, a movement to which, in the frank innocence of her heart, she made no resistance; folded her to his bosom, and impressed a fervent kiss upon her lips; whilst the only words that came to his own were, "Beloved Paulina! oh, most beloved lady! what chance has brought you hither?"

Chapter IV

In those days of tragical confusion, and of sudden catastrophe, alike for better or for worse, when the rendings asunder of domestic charities were often within an hour's warning, when reunions were as dramatic and as unexpected as any which are exhibited on the stage, and too often separations were eternal,—the circumstances of the times concurred with the spirit of manners to sanction a tone of frank expression to the stronger passions which the reserve of modern habits would not entirely license. And hence, not less than from the noble ingenuousness of their natures,

the martial young cavalier and the superb young beauty of the Imperial house, on recovering themselves from their first transports, found no motives to any feeling of false shame, either in their own consciousness, or in the reproving looks of any who stood around them. On the contrary,—as the grown-up spectators were almost exclusively female, to whom the evidences of faithful love are never other than a serious subject, or naturally associated with the ludicrous,—many of them expressed their sympathy with the scene before them by tears, and all of them in some way or other. Even in this age of more fastidious manners, it is probable that the tender interchanges of affection between a young couple rejoining each other after deep calamities, and standing on the brink of fresh, perhaps endless, separations, would meet with something of the same indulgence from the least interested witnesses.

Hence the news was diffused through the camp with general satisfaction that a noble and accomplished cavalier, the favoured lover of their beloved young mistress, had joined them from Klosterheim with a chosen band of volunteers, upon whose fidelity in action they might entirely depend. Some vague account floated about, at the same time, of the marauding attack upon the Lady Paulina's carriage. But, naturally enough, from the confusion and hurry incident to a nocturnal disturbance, the circumstances were mixed up with the arrival of Maximilian, in a way which ascribed to him the merit of having repelled an attack which might else have proved fatal to the lady of his heart. And this romantic interposition of Providence on a young lady's behalf, through the agency of her lover, unexpected on her part, and unconscious on his, proved so equally gratifying to the passion for the marvellous and the interest in youthful love that no other or truer version of the case could ever obtain a popular acceptance in the camp, or afterwards in Klosterheim. And, had it been the express purpose of Maximilian to found a belief, for his own future benefit, of a providential sanction vouchsafed to his connexion with the Lady Paulina, he could not, by the best arranged contrivances, have more fully attained that end.

It was yet short of midnight by more than an hour ; and therefore, on the suggestion of Maximilian, who reported the roads across the forest perfectly quiet, and alleged some arguments for quieting the general apprehension for this night, the travellers and troops retired to rest, as the best means of preparing them to face the trials of the two next days. It was judged requisite, however, to strengthen the night-guard very considerably, and to relieve it at least every two hours. That the poor sentinel on the forest side of the encampment had been in some mysterious way trepanned upon his post was now too clearly ascertained, for he was missing ; and the character of the man, no less than the absence of all intelligible temptation to such an act, forbade the suspicion of his having deserted. On this quarter, therefore, a file of select marksmen was stationed, with directions instantly to pick off every moving figure that showed itself within their range. Of these men Maximilian himself took the command, and by this means he obtained the opportunity, so enviable to one long separated from his mistress, of occasionally conversing with her, and of watching over her safety. In one point he showed a distinguished control over his inclinations ; for, much as he had to tell her, and ardently as he longed for communicating with her on various subjects of common interest, he would not suffer her to keep the window down for more than a minute or two in so dreadful a state of the atmosphere. She, on her part, exacted a promise from him that he would leave his station at three o'clock in the morning. Meantime, as on the one hand she felt touched by this proof of her lover's solicitude for her safety, so, on the other, she was less anxious on his account, from the knowledge she had of his long habituation to the hardships of a camp, with which, indeed, he had been familiar from his childish days. Thus debarred from conversing with her lover, and at the same time feeling the most absolute confidence in his protection, she soon fell placidly asleep. The foremost subject of her anxiety and sorrow was now removed ; her lover had been restored to her hopes ; and her dreams were no longer haunted with horrors. Yet, at the same time, the turbulence of joy, and of hope fulfilled unexpectedly, had substituted

its own disturbances ; and her sleep was often interrupted. But, as often as that happened, she had the delightful pleasure of seeing her lover's figure, with its martial equipments, and the drooping plumes of his yager barrette, as he took his station at her carriage, traced out on the ground in the bright glare of the flambeaux. She awoke, therefore, continually to the sense of restored happiness ; and at length fell finally asleep, to wake no more until the morning trumpet, at the break of day, proclaimed the approaching preparations for the general movement of the camp.

Snow had fallen in the night. Towards four o'clock in the morning, amongst those who held that watch, there had been a strong apprehension that it would fall heavily. But that state of the atmosphere had passed off ; and it had not in fact fallen sufficiently to abate the cold, or much to retard their march. According to the usual custom of the camp, a general breakfast was prepared, at which all without distinction messed together—a sufficient homage being expressed to superior rank by resigning the upper part of every table to those who had any distinguished pretensions of that kind. On this occasion, Paulina had the gratification of seeing the public respect offered in the most marked manner to her lover. He had retired about daybreak to take an hour's repose,—for she found, from her attendants, with mingled vexation and pleasure, that he had not fulfilled his promise of retiring at an earlier hour, in consequence of some renewed appearances of a suspicious kind in the woods. In his absence, she heard a resolution proposed and carried amongst the whole body of veteran officers attached to the party, that the chief military command should be transferred to Maximilian, not merely as a distinguished favourite of the Emperor, but also, and much more, as one of the most brilliant cavalry officers in the Imperial service. This resolution was communicated to him on his taking the place reserved for him at the head of the principal breakfast-table ; and Paulina thought that he had never appeared more interesting or truly worthy of admiration than under that exhibition of courtesy and modest dignity with which he first earnestly declined the honour in favour of older officers,—and then finally complied with what he found to

be the sincere wish of the company by frankly accepting it. Paulina had grown up amongst military men, and had been early trained to a sympathy with military merit—the very court of the Emperor had something of the complexion of a camp—and the object of her own youthful choice was elevated in her eyes, if it were at all possible that he should be so, by this ratification of his claims on the part of those whom she looked up to as the most competent judges.

Before nine o'clock the van of the party was in motion; then, with a short interval, came all the carriages of every description, and the Papenheim dragoons as a rearguard. About eleven, the sun began to burst out, and illuminated, with the cheerful crimson of a frosty morning, those horizontal draperies of mist which had previously stifled his beams. The extremity of the cold was a good deal abated by this time; and Paulina, alighting from her carriage, mounted a led horse, which gave her the opportunity, so much wished for by them both, of conversing freely with Maximilian. For a long time the interest and animation of their reciprocal communications, and the magnitude of the events since they had parted, affecting either or both of them directly, or in the persons of their friends, had the natural effect of banishing any dejection which nearer and more pressing concerns would else have called forth. But, in the midst of this factitious animation, and the happiness which otherwise so undisguisedly possessed Maximilian at their unexpected reunion, it shocked Paulina to observe in her lover a degree of gravity almost amounting to sadness, which argued, in a soldier of his gallantry, some overpowering sense of danger. In fact, upon being pressed to say the worst, Maximilian frankly avowed that he was ill at ease with regard to their prospects when the hour of trial should arrive; and that hour he had no hope of evading. Holkerstein, he well knew, had been continually receiving reports of their condition, as they reached their nightly stations, for the last three days. Spies had been round about them, and even in the midst of them, throughout the darkness of the last night. Spies were keeping pace with them as they advanced. The certainty of being attacked was therefore pretty nearly absolute. Then, as to their means of defence,

and the relations of strength between the parties, in numbers it was not impossible that Holkerstein might triple themselves. The *elite* of their own men might be superior to most of his, though counting amongst their number many deserters from veteran regiments; but the horses of their own party were in general poor and out of condition,—and of the whole train, whom Maximilian had inspected at starting, not two hundred could be pronounced fit for making or sustaining a charge. It was true, that by mounting some of their picked troopers upon the superior horses of the most distinguished amongst the travellers, who had willingly consented to an arrangement of this nature for the general benefit, some partial remedy had been applied to their weakness in that one particular. But there were others in which Holkerstein had even greater advantages; more especially, the equipments of his partisans were entirely new, having been plundered from an ill-guarded armoury near Munich, or from convoys which he had attacked. "Who would be a gentleman," says an old proverb, "let him storm a town," and the gay appearance of this robber's companions threw a light upon its meaning. The ruffian companions of this marauder were, besides, animated by hopes such as no regular commander in an honourable service could find the means of holding out. And finally, they were familiar with all the forest roads and innumerable bypaths, on which it was that the best points lay for surprising an enemy, or for a retreat; whilst, in their own case, encumbered with the protection of a large body of travellers and helpless people, whom, under any circumstances, it was hazardous to leave, they were tied up to the most slavish dependency upon the weakness of their companions, and had it not in their power either to evade the most evident advantages on the side of the enemy, or to pursue such as they might be fortunate enough to create for themselves.

"But, after all," said Maximilian, assuming a tone of gaiety, upon finding that the candour of his explanations had depressed his fair companion, "the saying of an old Swedish[1] enemy of mine is worth remembering in such

[1] It was the Swedish General Kniphausen, a favourite of Gustavus, to whom this maxim is ascribed.

cases,—that nine times out of ten a drachm of good luck is worth an ounce of good contrivance,—and, were it not, dearest Paulina, that you are with us, I would think the risk not heavy. Perhaps, by to-morrow's sunset, we shall all look back, from our pleasant seats in the warm refectories of Klosterheim, with something of scorn upon our present apprehensions.—And see! at this very moment the turn of the road has brought us in view of our port, though distant from us, according to the windings of the forest, something more than twenty miles. The range of hills which you observe ahead, but a little inclined to the left, overhangs Klosterheim; and, with the sun in a more favourable quarter, you might even at this point descry the pinnacles of the citadel, or the loftiest of the convent towers. Half an hour will bring us to the close of our day's march."

In reality, a few minutes sufficed to bring them within view of the *chateau* where their quarters had been prepared for this night. This was a great hunting establishment, kept up at vast expense by the two last and present Landgraves of X———. Many interesting anecdotes were connected with the history of this building; and the beauty of the forest scenery was conspicuous even in winter, enlivened as the endless woods continued to be by the scarlet berries of mountain-ash, or the dark verdure of the holly and the ilex. Under her present frame of pensive feeling, the quiet lawns and long-withdrawing glades of these vast woods had a touching effect upon the feelings of Paulina; their deep silence, and the tranquillity which reigned amongst them, contrasting in her remembrance with the hideous scenes of carnage and desolation through which her path had too often lain. With these predisposing influences to aid him, Maximilian found it easy to draw off her attention from the dangers which pressed upon their situation. Her sympathies were so quick with those whom she loved that she readily adopted their apparent hopes or their fears; and so entire was her confidence in the superior judgment, and the perfect gallantry, of her lover, that her countenance reflected immediately the prevailing expression of his.

Under these impressions Maximilian suffered her to remain. It seemed cruel to disturb her with the truth. He

was sensible that continued anxiety, and dreadful or afflicting spectacles, had with her, as with most persons of her sex in Germany at that time, unless protected by singular insensibility, somewhat impaired the firm tone of her mind. He was determined, therefore, to consult her comfort by disguising or palliating their true situation. But, for his own part, he could not hide from his conviction the extremity of their danger ; nor could he, when recurring to the precious interests at stake upon the issue of that and the next day's trials, face with any firmness the afflicting results to which they tended, under the known barbarity and ruffian character of their unprincipled enemy.

Chapter V

The chateau of Falkenberg, which the travellers reached with the decline of light, had the usual dependencies of offices and gardens which may be supposed essential to a prince's hunting establishment in that period. It stood at a distance of eighteen miles from Klosterheim, and presented the sole *oasis* of culture and artificial beauty throughout the vast extent of those wild tracts of silvan ground.

The great central pile of the building was dismantled of furniture ; but the travellers carried with them, as was usual in the heat of war, all the means of fencing against the cold, and giving even a luxurious equipment to their dormitories. In so large a party, the deficiencies of one were compensated by the redundant contributions of another. And, so long as they were not under the old Roman interdict, excluding them from seeking fire and water of those on whom their day's journey had thrown them, their own travelling stores enabled them to accommodate themselves to all other privations. On this occasion, however, they found more than they had expected ; for there was at Falkenberg a store of all the game in season, constantly held up for the use of the Landgrave's household, and the more favoured monasteries at Klosterheim. The small establishment of keepers, foresters, and other servants, who occupied the chateau, had received no orders to refuse the hospitality usually practised in the Landgrave's name ; or thought proper to dissemble them in their

present circumstances of inability to resist. And, having from necessity permitted so much, they were led by a sense of their master's honour, or their own sympathy with the condition of so many women and children, to do more. Rations of game were distributed liberally to all the messes; wine was not refused by the old *kellermeister*, who rightly considered that some thanks, and smiles of courteous acknowledgment, might be a better payment than the hard knocks with which military paymasters were sometimes apt to settle their accounts. And upon the whole it was agreed that no such evening of comfort and even luxurious enjoyment had been spent since their departure from Vienna.

One wing of the chateau was magnificently furnished; this, which of itself was tolerably extensive, had been resigned to the use of Paulina, Maximilian, and others of the military gentlemen, whose manners and deportment seemed to entitle them to superior attentions. Here, amongst many marks of refinement and intellectual culture, there was a library and a gallery of portraits. In the library, some of the officers had detected sufficient evidences of the Swedish alliances clandestinely maintained by the Landgrave; numbers of rare books, bearing the arms of different Imperial cities, which, in the several campaigns of Gustavus, had been appropriated as they fell into his hands, by way of fair reprisals for the robbery of the whole Palatine library at Heidelberg, had been since transferred (as it thus appeared) to the Landgrave, by purchase or as presents; and on either footing argued a correspondence with the Emperor's enemies, which hitherto he had strenuously disavowed. The picture-gallery, it was very probable, had been collected in the same manner. It contained little else than portraits, but these were truly admirable and interesting, being all recent works from the pencil of Vandyke, and composing a series of heads and features the most remarkable for station in the one sex, or for beauty in the other, which that age presented. Amongst them were nearly all the Imperial leaders of distinction, and many of the Swedish. Maximilian and his brother officers took the liveliest pleasure in perambulating this gallery with Paulina, and reviewing with her these fine historical memorials. Out of their joint recollections, or the facts of

their personal experience, they were able to supply any defective links in that commentary which her own knowledge of the Imperial court would have enabled her in so many instances to furnish upon this martial register of the age.

The wars of the Netherlands had transplanted to Germany that stock upon which the camps of the Thirty Years' War were originally raised. Accordingly a smaller gallery, at right angles with the great one, presented a series of portraits from the old Spanish leaders and Walloon partisans. From Egmont and Horn, the Duke of Alva and Parma, down to Spinola, the last of that distinguished school of soldiers, no man of eminence was omitted. Even the worthless and insolent Earl of Leicester, with his gallant nephew—that *ultimus Romanorum* in the rolls of chivalry—was not excluded, though it was pretty evident that a Catholic zeal had presided in forming the collection. For together with the Prince of Orange, and *Henri Quatre*, were to be seen their vile assassins—portrayed with a lavish ostentation of ornament, and enshrined in a frame so gorgeous as raised them in some degree to the rank of consecrated martyrs.

From these past generations of eminent persons, who retained only a traditional or legendary importance in the eyes of most who were now reviewing them, all turned back with delight to the active spirits of their own day, many of them yet living, and as warm with life and heroic aspirations as their inimitable portraits had represented them. Here was Tilly, the "little corporal," now recently stretched in a soldier's grave, with his wily and inflexible features. Over against him was his great enemy, who had first taught him the hard lesson of retreating, Gustavus Adolphus, with his colossal bust, and "atlantean shoulders, fit to bear the weight of mightiest monarchies." He also had perished, and too probably by the double crime of assassination and private treason; but the public glory of his short career was proclaimed in the ungenerous exultations of Catholic Rome from Vienna to Madrid, and the individual heroism in the lamentations of soldiers under every banner which now floated in Europe. Beyond him ran the long line of Imperial generals—from Wallenstein, the magnificent and the imaginative, with Hamlet's infirmity of purpose, De Mercy, &c.,

down to the heroes of partisan warfare, Holk, the Butlers, and the noble Papenheim, or nobler Piccolómini. Below them were ranged Gustavus Horn, Banier, the Prince of Saxe-Weimar, the Rhinegrave, and many other Protestant commanders whose names and military merits were familiar to Paulina, though she now beheld their features for the first time. Maximilian was here the best interpreter that she could possibly have met with. For he had not only seen the greater part of them on the field of battle, but, as a favourite and confidential officer of the Emperor's, had personally been concerned in diplomatic transactions with the most distinguished amongst them.

Midnight insensibly surprised them whilst pursuing the many interesting historical remembrances which the portraits called up. Most of the company upon this warning of the advanced hour began to drop off; some to rest, and some upon the summons of the military duty which awaited them in their turn. In this way, Maximilian and Paulina were gradually left alone, and now at length found a time which had not before offered for communicating freely all that pressed upon their hearts. Maximilian, on his part, going back to the period of their last sudden separation, explained his own sudden disappearance from Vienna. At a moment's warning he had been sent off with sealed orders from the Emperor, to be first opened in Klosterheim: the mission upon which he had been despatched was of consequence to the Imperial interests, and through his Majesty's favour would eventually prove so to his own. Thus it was that he had been peremptorily cut off from all opportunity of communicating to herself the purpose and direction of his journey previously to his departure from Vienna; and, if his Majesty had not taken that care upon himself, but had contented himself in the most general terms with assuring Paulina that Maximilian was absent on a private mission, doubtless his intention had been the kind one of procuring her a more signal surprise of pleasure upon his own sudden return. Unfortunately, however, that return had become impossible: things had latterly taken a turn which embarrassed himself, and continued to require his presence. These perplexities had been for some time known to the Emperor; and, upon

reflection, he doubted not that her own journey, undertaken before his Majesty could be aware of the dangers which would beset its latter end, must in some way be connected with the remedy which the Emperor designed for this difficult affair. But doubtless she herself was the bearer of sufficient explanations from the Imperial ministers on that head. Finally, whilst assuring her that his own letters to herself had been as frequent as in any former absence, Maximilian confessed that he did not feel greatly astonished at the fact of none at all having reached her, when he recollected that to the usual adverse accidents of war, daily intercepting all messengers not powerfully escorted, were to be added, in this case, the express efforts of private malignity in command of all the forest passes.

This explanation recalled Paulina to a very painful sense of the critical importance which might be attached to the papers which she had lost. As yet, she had found no special opportunity, or, believing it of less importance, had neglected it, for communicating more than the general fact of a robbery. She now related the case more circumstantially ; and both were struck with it, as at this moment a very heavy misfortune. Not only might her own perilous journey, and the whole purposes of the Emperor embarked upon it, be thus rendered abortive ; but their common enemies would by this time be possessed of the whole information which had been so critically lost to their own party, and perhaps would have it in their power to make use of themselves as instruments for defeating their own most important hopes.

Maximilian sighed as he reflected on the probability that a far shorter and bloodier event might defeat every earthly hope within the next twenty-four hours. But he dissembled his feelings ; recovered even a tone of gaiety ; and, begging of Paulina to dismiss this vexatious incident from her thoughts, as a matter that after all would probably be remedied by their first communication with the Emperor, and before any evil had resulted from it, he accompanied her to the entrance of her own suite of chambers, and then returned to seek a few hours' repose for himself on one of the sofas he had observed in one of the small anterooms attached to the library.

The particular room which he selected for his purpose, on account of its small size, and its warm appearance in other respects, was furnished under foot with layers of heavy Turkey carpets, one laid upon another (according to a fashion then prevalent in Germany), and on the walls with tapestry. In this mode of hanging rooms, though sometimes heavy and sombre, there was a warmth, sensible and apparent as well as real, which peculiarly fitted it for winter apartments, and a massy splendour which accorded with the style of dress and furniture in that gorgeous age. One real disadvantage, however, it had as often employed: it gave a ready concealment to intruders with evil intentions; and under the protecting screen of tapestry many a secret had been discovered, many robberies facilitated, and some celebrated murderers had been sheltered, with circumstances of mystery that for ever baffled investigation.

Maximilian smiled as the sight of the hangings, with their rich colours glowing in the fire-light, brought back to his remembrance one of those tales which in the preceding winter had made a great noise in Vienna. With a soldier's carelessness, he thought lightly of all dangers that could arise within four walls; and, having extinguished the lights which burned upon a table, and unbuckled his sabre, he threw himself upon a sofa which he drew near to the fire; and then, enveloping himself in a large horseman's cloak, he courted the approach of sleep. The fatigues of the day, and of the preceding night, had made this in some measure needful to him. But weariness is not always the best preface to repose; and the irritation of many busy anxieties continued for some time to keep him in a most uneasy state of vigilance. As he lay, he could see on one side the fantastic figures in the fire composed of wood and turf; on the other side, looking to the tapestry, he saw the wild forms and the *melée*, little less fantastic, of human and brute features in a chase—a boar chase in front, and a stag chase on his left hand. These, as they rose fitfully in bright masses of colour and of savage expression under the lambent flashing of the fire, continued to excite his irritable state of feeling; and it was not for some time that he felt this uneasy condition give way to exhaustion. He was at length on the very point of falling

asleep, or perhaps had already fallen into its very lightest and earliest stage, when the echo of a distant door awoke him. He had some slight impression that a noise in his own room had concurred with the other and more distant one to awake him. But, after raising himself for a moment on his elbow and listening, he again resigned himself to sleep.

Again, however, and probably before he had slept a minute, he was roused by a double disturbance. A low rustling was heard in some part of the room, and a heavy foot upon a neighbouring staircase. Roused at length to the prudence of paying some attention to sounds so stealthy, in a situation beset with dangers, he rose and threw open the door. A corridor, which ran round the head of the staircase, was lit up with a brilliant light; and he could command from this station one flight of the stairs. On these he saw nothing; all was now wrapt in a soft effulgence of light, and in absolute silence. No sound recurring after a minute's attention, and indisposed by weariness to any stricter examination, where all examination from one so little acquainted with the localities might prove unavailing, he returned to his own room; but, before again lying down, he judged it prudent to probe the concealments of the tapestry by carrying his sabre round, and everywhere pressing the hangings to the wall. In this trial he met with no resistance at any point; and, willingly believing that he had been deceived, or that his ear had exaggerated some trivial sound, in a state of imperfect slumber, he again lay down and addressed himself to sleep. Still there were remembrances which occurred at this moment to disturb him. The readiness with which they had been received at the chateau was in itself suspicious. He remembered the obstinate haunting of their camp on the preceding night, and the robbery conducted with so much knowledge of circumstances. Jonas Melk, the brutal landlord of Waldenhausen, a man known to him by repute (though not personally) as one of the vilest agents employed by the Landgrave, had been actively engaged in his master's service at their preceding stage. He was probably one of those who haunted the wood through the night. And he had been repeatedly informed through the course of the day that this man in particular, whose features were noticed by

the yagers, on occasion of their officer's reproach to him, had been seen at intervals in company with others, keeping a road parallel to their own, and steadily watching their order of advance.

These recollections, now laid together, impressed him with some uneasiness. But overpowering weariness gave him a strong interest in dismissing them. And a soldier, with the images of fifty combats fresh in his mind, does not willingly admit the idea of danger from a single arm, and in a situation of household security. Pshaw! he exclaimed, with some disdain, as these martial remembrances rose up before him, especially as the silence had now continued undisturbed for a quarter of an hour. In five minutes more he had fallen profoundly asleep; and in less than one half hour, as he afterwards judged, he was suddenly awakened by a dagger at his throat.

At one bound he sprang upon his feet. The cloak, in which he had been enveloped, caught upon some of the buckles or ornamented work of his appointments, and for a moment embarrassed his motions. There was no light, except what came from the sullen and intermitting gleams of the fire. But even this was sufficient to show him the dusky outline of two figures. With the foremost he grappled, and, raising him in his arms, threw him powerfully upon the floor, with a force that left him stunned and helpless. The other had endeavoured to pinion his arms from behind; for the body armour, which Maximilian had not laid aside for the night, under the many anticipations of service which their situation suggested, proved a sufficient protection against the blows of the assassin's poniard. Impatient of the darkness and uncertainty, Maximilian rushed to the door and flung it violently open. The assassin still clung to his arms, conscious that if he once forfeited his hold until he had secured a retreat, he should be taken at disadvantage. But Maximilian now drawing a petronel which hung at his belt, cocked it as rapidly as his embarrassed motions allowed him. The assassin faltered, conscious that a moment's relaxation of grasp would enable his antagonist to turn the muzzle over his shoulder. Maximilian, on the other hand, now perfectly awake, and with the benefit of that self-possession which the

other so entirely wanted, felt the nervous tremor in the villain's hands ; and, profiting by this moment of indecision, made a desperate effort, released one arm, which he used with so much effect as immediately to liberate the other, and then intercepting the passage to the stairs, wheeled round upon his murderous enemy, and presenting the petronel to his breast, bade him surrender his arms if he hoped for quarter.

The man was an athletic, and, obviously, a most powerful, ruffian. On his face he carried more than one large glazed cicatrix, that assisted the savage expression of malignity impressed by nature upon his features. And his matted black hair, with its elf locks, completed the picturesque effect of a face that proclaimed, in every lineament, a reckless abandonment to cruelty and ferocious passions. Maximilian himself, familiar as he was with the faces of military butchers in the dreadful hours of sack and carnage, recoiled for one instant from this hideous ruffian, who had not even the palliations of youth in his favour, for he seemed fifty at the least. All this had passed in an instant of time ; and now, as he recovered himself from his momentary shock at so hateful an expression of evil passions, great was Maximilian's astonishment to perceive his antagonist apparently speechless, and struggling with some overmastering sense of horror, that convulsed his features, and for a moment glazed his eye.

Maximilian looked round for the object of his alarm ; but in vain. In reality it was himself, in connexion with some too dreadful remembrances, now suddenly awakened, that had thus overpowered the man's nerves. The brilliant light of a large chandelier which overhung the staircase fell strongly upon Maximilian's features ; and the excitement of the moment gave to them the benefit of their fullest expression. Prostrate on the ground, and abandoning his dagger without an effort at retaining it, the man gazed, as if under a rattlesnake's fascination, at the young soldier before him. Suddenly he recovered his voice ; and, with a piercing cry of unaffected terror, exclaimed, "Save me, save me, blessed Virgin !—Prince, noble prince, forgive me !—Will the grave not hold its own ?—Jesu Maria ! who could have believed it ?"

"Listen, fellow!" interrupted Maximilian; "what prince is it you speak of?—For whom do you take me? speak truly, and abuse not my forbearance."

"Ha! and his own voice too!—and here on this spot!—God is just!—Yet do thou, good patron, holy St. Ermengarde, deliver me from the avenger!"

"Man, you rave!—Stand up, recover yourself, and answer me to what I shall ask thee: speak truly, and thou shalt have thy life. Whose gold was it that armed thy hand against one who had injured neither thee nor thine?"

But he spoke to one who could no longer hear. The man grovelled on the ground, and hid his face from a being whom, in some incomprehensible way, he regarded as an apparition from the other world.

Multitudes of persons had by this time streamed in; summoned by the noise of the struggle from all parts of the chateau. Some fancied that, in the frenzied assassin on the ground, whose panic too manifestly attested itself as genuine, they recognised one of those who had so obstinately dogged them by side-paths in the forest. Whoever he were, and upon whatever mission employed, he was past all rational examination; at the aspect of Maximilian, he relapsed into convulsive horrors, which soon became too fit for medical treatment to allow of any useful judicial enquiry; and for the present he was consigned to the safe-keeping of the Provost-Marshal.

His companion, meantime, had profited by his opportunity, and the general confusion, to effect his escape. Nor was this difficult. Perhaps in the consternation of the first moment, and the exclusive attention that settled upon the party in the corridor, he might even have mixed in the crowd. But this was not necessary. For, on raising the tapestry, a door was discovered which opened into a private passage, having a general communication with the rest of the rooms on that floor. Steps were now taken, by sentries disposed through the interior of the mansion at proper points, to secure themselves from the enemies who lurked within, whom hitherto they had too much neglected for the avowed and more military assailants who menaced them from without. Security was thus restored. But a deep impression

accompanied the party to their couches, of the profound political motives, or (in the absence of those) of the rancorous personal malignity, which could prompt such obstinate persecution; by modes also, and by hands, which encountered so many chances of failing; and which, even in the event of the very completest success for the present, could not be expected, under the eyes of so many witnesses, to escape a final exposure. Some enemy, of unusual ferocity, was too obviously working in the dark, and by agencies as mysterious as his own purpose.

Meantime, in the city of Klosterheim the general interest in the fortunes of the approaching travellers had suffered no abatement, and some circumstances had occurred to increase the popular irritation. It was known that Maximilian had escaped with a strong party of friends from the city; but how, or by whose connivance, could in no way be discovered. This had drawn upon all persons who were known as active partisans against the Landgrave, or liable to suspicion as friends of Maximilian, a vexatious persecution from the military police of the town. Some had been arrested; many called upon to give security for their future behaviour; and all had been threatened or treated with harshness. Hence, as well as from previous irritation and alarm on account of the party from Vienna, the whole town was in a state of extreme agitation.

Klosterheim, in the main features of its political distractions, reflected, almost as in a representative picture, the condition of many another German city. At that period, by very ancient ties of reciprocal service, strengthened by treaties, by religious faith, and by personal attachment to individuals of the Imperial house, this ancient and sequestered city was inalienably bound to the interests of the Emperor. Both the city and the university were Catholic. Princes of the Imperial family, and Papal commissioners, who had secret motives for not appearing at Vienna, had more than once found a hospitable reception within the walls. And, amongst many acts of grace by which the Emperors had acknowledged these services and marks of attachment, one of them had advanced a very large sum of money to the city chest for an indefinite time; receiving in

return, as the warmest testimony of confidential gratitude which the city could bestow, that *jus liberi ingressus* which entitled the Emperor's armies to a free passage at all times, and, in cases of extremity, to the right of keeping the city gates and maintaining a garrison in the citadel. Unfortunately, Klosterheim was not *sui juris*, or on the roll of free cities of the Empire, but of the nature of an appanage in the family of the Landgrave of X—— ; and this circumstance had produced a double perplexity in the politics of the city; for the late Landgrave, who had been assassinated in a very mysterious manner upon a hunting party, benefited to the fullest extent both by the political and religious bias of the city—being a personal friend of the Emperor's, a Catholic, amiable in his deportment, and generally beloved by his subjects. But the Prince who had succeeded him in the Landgraviate as the next heir was everywhere odious for the harshness of his government, no less than for the gloomy austerity of his character ; and to Klosterheim, in particular, which had been pronounced by some of the first jurisprudents a female appanage, he presented himself under the additional disadvantages of a very suspicious title and a Swedish bias too notorious to be disguised. At a time when the religious and political attachments of Europe were brought into collisions so strange that the foremost auxiliary of the Protestant interest in Germany was really the most distinguished Cardinal in the Church of Rome, it did not appear inconsistent with this strong leaning to the King of Sweden that the Landgrave was privately known to be a Catholic bigot, who practised the severest penances, and, tyrant as he showed himself to all others, grovelled himself as an abject devotee at the feet of a haughty confessor. Amongst the populace of Klosterheim, this feature of his character, confronted with the daily proofs of his entire vassalage to the Swedish interest, passed for the purest hypocrisy ; and he had credit for no religion at all with the world at large. But the fact was otherwise. Conscious from the first that he held even the Landgraviate by a slender title (for he was no more than cousin once removed to his immediate predecessor), and that his pretensions upon Klosterheim had separate and peculiar defects, sinking of

course with the failure of his claim as Landgrave, but not therefore prospering with its success,—he was aware that none but the most powerful arm could keep his princely cap upon his head. The competitors for any part of his possessions, one and all, had thrown themselves upon the Emperor's protection. This, if no other reason, would have thrown him into the arms of Gustavus Adolphus; and with this, as it happened, other reasons of local importance had then and since co-operated. Time, as it advanced, brought increase of weight to all these motives. Rumours of a dark and ominous tendency, arising no one knew whence, nor by whom encouraged, pointed injuriously to the past history of the Landgrave, and to some dreadful exposures which were hanging over his head. A lady, at present in obscurity, was alluded to as the agent of redress to others, through her own heavy wrongs; and these rumours were the more acceptable to the people of Klosterheim because they connected the impending punishment of the hated Landgrave with the restoration of the Imperial connexion; for it was still insinuated, under every version of these mysterious reports, that the Emperor was the ultimate supporter, in the last resort, of the lurking claims now on the point of coming forward to challenge public attention. Under these alarming notices, and fully aware that sooner or later he must be thrown into collision with the Imperial court, the Landgrave had now for some time made up his mind to found a merit with the Swedish chancellor and general officers, by precipitating an uncompromising rupture with his Catholic enemies, and thus to extract the grace of a voluntary act from what, in fact, he knew to be sooner or later inevitable.

Such was the positive and relative aspect of the several interests which were now struggling in Klosterheim. Desperate measures were contemplated by both parties; and, as opportunities should arise, and proper means should develop themselves, more than one party might be said to stand on the brink of great explosions. Conspiracies were moving in darkness, both in the council of the burghers and of the university. Imperfect notices of their schemes, and sometimes delusive or misleading notices, had reached the Landgrave. The city, the university, and the numerous convents,

were crowded to excess with refugees. Malcontents of every denomination and every shade,—emissaries of all the factions which then agitated Germany,—reformado soldiers, laid aside by their original employers, under new arrangements, or from private jealousies of new commanders,—great persons with special reasons for courting a temporary seclusion, and preserving a strict incognito,—misers, who fled with their hoards of gold and jewels to this city of refuge,—desolate ladies, from the surrounding provinces, in search of protection for themselves, or for the honour of their daughters; and (not least distinguished among the many classes of fugitives) prophets and enthusiasts of every description, whom the magnitude of the political events, and their religious origin, so naturally called forth in swarms;—these, and many more, in connexion with their attendants, troops, students, and the terrified peasantry, from a circle of forty miles radius around the city as a centre, had swelled the city of Klosterheim, from a total of about seventeen, to six or seven-and-thirty thousand. War, with a slight reserve for the late robberies of Holkerstein, had as yet spared this favoured nook of Germany. The great storm had whistled and raved around them; but hitherto none had penetrated the silvan sanctuary which on every side invested this privileged city. The ground seemed charmed by some secret spells, and consecrated from intrusion. For the great tempest had often swept directly upon them, and yet still had wheeled off, summoned away by some momentary call, to some remoter attraction. But now at length all things portended that, if the war should revive in strength after this brief suspension, it would fall with accumulated weight upon this yet unravaged district.

This was the anticipation which had governed the Landgrave's policy in so sternly and barbarously interfering with the generous purposes of the Klosterheimers for carrying over a safe-conduct to their friends and visitors, when standing on the margin of the forest. The robber Holkerstein, if not expressly countenanced by the Swedes and secretly nursed up to his present strength by Richelieu, was at any rate embarked upon a system of aggression which would probably terminate in connecting him with one or

other of those authentic powers. In any case, he stood committed to a course of continued offence upon the Imperial interests; since in that quarter his injuries and insults were already past forgiveness. The interest of Holkerstein, then, ran in the same channel with that of the Landgrave. It was impolitic to weaken him. It was doubly impolitic to weaken him by a measure which must also weaken the Landgrave; for any deduction from his own military force, or from the means of recruiting it, was in that proportion a voluntary sacrifice of the weight he should obtain with the Swedes on making the junction, which he now firmly counted on, with their forces. But a result which he still more dreaded from the co-operation of the Klosterheimers with the caravan from Vienna was the probable overthrow of that supremacy in the city which even now was so nicely balanced in his favour that a slight reinforcement to the other side would turn the scale against him.

In all these calculations of policy, and the cruel measures by which he supported them, he was guided by the counsels of Luigi Adorni—a subtle Italian, whom he had elevated from the post of a private secretary to that of sole minister for the conduct of state affairs. This man, who covered a temperament of terrific violence with a masque of Venetian dissimulation and the most icy reserve, met with no opposition, unless it were occasionally from Father Anselm, the confessor. He delighted in the refinements of intrigue, and in the most tortuous labyrinths of political manœuvring, purely for their own sakes; and sometimes defeated his own purposes by mere superfluity of diplomatic subtlety; which hardly, however, won a momentary concern from him in the pleasure he experienced at having found an undeniable occasion for equal subtlety in unweaving his own webs of deception. He had been confounded by the evasion of Maximilian and his friends from the orders of the Landgrave; and the whole energy of his nature was bent to the discovery of the secret avenues which had opened the means to this elopement.

There were, in those days, as is well known to German antiquaries, few castles or fortresses of much importance in Germany which did not communicate by subterraneous

passages with the exterior country. In many instances these passages were of surprising extent, first emerging to the light in some secluded spot among rocks or woods, at the distance of two, three, or even four miles. There were cases even in which they were carried below the beds of rivers as broad and deep as the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Danube. Sometimes there were several of such communications on different faces of the fortress ; and sometimes each of these branched, at some distance from the building, into separate arms, opening at intervals widely apart. And the uses of such secret communications with the world outside, and beyond a besieging enemy, in a land like Germany, with its prodigious subdivision of independent states and free cities, were far greater than they could have been in any one great continuous principality.

In many fortified places these passages had existed from the middle ages. In Klosterheim they had possibly as early an origin ; but by this period it is very probable that the gradual accumulation of rubbish, through a course of centuries, would have unfitted them for use, had not the Peasants' War, in the time of Luther's Reformation, little more than one hundred years before, given occasion for their use and repair. At that time Klosterheim had stood a siege which, from the defect of artillery, was at no time formidable in a military sense ; but as a blockade, formed suddenly when the citizens were slenderly furnished with provisions, it would certainly have succeeded, and delivered up the vast wealth of the convents as a spoil to the peasantry, had it not been for one in particular of these subterraneous passages, which opening on the opposite side of the little river Iltiss, in a thick *boccage*, where the enemy had established no posts, furnished the means of introducing a continual supply of fresh provisions, to the great triumph of the garrison, and the utter dismay of the superstitious peasants, who looked upon the mysterious supply as a providential bounty to a consecrated cause.

So memorable a benefit had given to this one passage a publicity and an historical importance which made all its circumstances, and amongst those its internal mouth, familiar even to children. But this was evidently *not* the avenue by

which Maximilian had escaped into the forest. For it opened externally on the wrong side of the river, whilst everybody knew that its domestic opening was in one of the chapels of the *schloss*; and another circumstance equally decisive was that a long flight of stairs, by which it descended below the bed of the river, made it impassable to horses.

Every attempt, however, failed to trace out the mode of egress for the present. By his spies, Adorni doubted not to find it soon; and in the meantime, that as much as possible the attention of the public might be abstracted from the travellers and their concerns, a public proclamation was issued forbidding all resorts of crowds to the walls. These were everywhere dispersed on the 9th; and for that day were partially obeyed. But there was little chance that, with any fresh excitement to the popular interest, they would continue to command respect.

Chapter VI

The morning of the 10th at length arrived—that day on which the expected travellers from Vienna, and all whom they had collected on their progress, ardently looked to rejoin their long-separated friends in Klosterheim, and by those friends were not less ardently looked for. On each side there were the same violent yearnings, on each side the same dismal and overpowering fears. Each party arose with palpitating hearts: the one looked out from Falkenberg with longing eyes to discover the towers of Klosterheim; the other, from the upper windows or roofs of Klosterheim, seemed as if they could consume the distance between themselves and Falkenberg. But a little tract of forest ground was interposed between friends and friends, parents and children, lovers and their beloved. Not more than eighteen miles of shadowy woods, of lawns, and silvan glades, divided hearts that would either have encountered death or many deaths for the other. These were regions of natural peace and tranquillity, that in any ordinary times should have been peopled by no worse inhabitants than the timid hare scudding homewards to its form, or the wild deer sweeping by with thunder to their distant lairs. But now from every glen or

thicket armed marauders might be ready to start. Every gleam of sunshine in some seasons was reflected from the glittering arms of parties threading the intricacies of the thickets ; and the sudden alarum of the trumpet rang oftentimes in the nights, and awoke the echoes that for centuries had been undisturbed, except by the hunter's horn, in the most sequestered haunts of these vast woods.

Towards noon it became known, by signals that had been previously concerted between Maximilian and his college friends, that the party were advanced upon their road from Falkenberg, and therefore must of necessity on this day abide the final trial. As this news was dispersed abroad, the public anxiety rose to so feverish a point that crowds rushed from every quarter to the walls ; and it was not judged prudent to measure the civic strength against their enthusiasm. For an hour or two the nature of the ground and the woods forbade any view of the advancing party : but at length, some time before the light failed, the head of the column, and soon after the entire body, was descried surmounting a little hill not more than eight miles distant. The black mass presented by mounted travellers and baggage waggons was visible to piercing eyes : and the dullest could distinguish the glancing of arms which at times flashed upwards from the more open parts of the forest.

Thus far, then, their friends had made their way without injury : and this point was judged to be within nine miles distance. But in thirty or forty minutes, when they had come nearer by a mile and a half, the scene had somewhat changed. A heathy tract of ground, perhaps two miles in length, opened in the centre of the thickest woods, and formed a little island of clear ground where all beside was tangled and crowded with impediments. Just as the travelling party began to deploy out of the woods upon this area at its further extremity, a considerable body of mounted troops emerged from the forest, which had hitherto concealed them, at the point nearest to Klosterheim. They made way rapidly ; and in less than half a minute it became evident, by the motions of the opposite party, that they had been descried, and that hasty preparations were making for receiving them. A dusky mass, probably the Black Yagers, galloped up

rapidly to the front and formed: after which it seemed to some eyes that the whole party again advanced, but still more slowly than before.

Every heart upon the walls of Klosterheim palpitated with emotion, as the two parties neared each other. Many almost feared to draw their breath, many writhed their persons in the anguish of rueful expectation, as they saw the moment approach when the two parties would shock together. At length it came; and to the astonishment of the spectators, not more perhaps than of the travellers themselves, the whole cavalcade of strangers swept by, without halting for so much as a passing salute or exchange of news.

The first cloud, then, which had menaced their friends was passed off as suddenly as it had gathered. But this by some people was thought to bear no favourable construction. To ride past a band of travellers from remote parts on such uncourteous terms argued no friendly spirit; and many motives might be imagined perfectly consistent with hostile intentions for passing the travellers unassailed, and thus gaining the means of coming at any time upon their rear. Prudent persons shook their heads; and the issue of an affair anticipated with so much anxiety certainly did not diminish it.

It was now four o'clock: in an hour or less it would be dark; and, considering the peculiar difficulties of the ground on nearing the town, and the increasing exhaustion of the horses, it was not judged possible that a party of travellers, so unequal in their equipments, and amongst whom the weakest was now become a law for the motion of the quickest, could reach the gates of Klosterheim before nine o'clock.

Soon after this, and just before the daylight faded, the travellers reached the nearer end of the heath, and again entered the woods. The cold and the darkness were now becoming greater at every instant, and it might have been expected that the great mass of the spectators would leave their station; but such was the intensity of the public interest that few quitted the walls except for the purpose of reinforcing their ability to stay and watch the progress of

their friends. This could be done with even greater effect as the darkness deepened, for every second horseman carried a torch; and, as much perhaps by way of signal to their friends in Klosterheim, as for their own convenience, prodigious flambeaux were borne aloft on halberds. These rose to a height which surmounted all the lower bushes, and were visible in all parts of the woods,—even the smaller lights, in the leafless state of the trees at this season of the year, could be generally traced without difficulty, and, composing a brilliant chain of glittering points, as it curved and humoured the road amongst the labyrinths of the forest, would have produced a singularly striking effect to eyes at leisure to enjoy it.

In this way, for about three hours, the travellers continued to advance unmolested, and to be traced by their friends in Klosterheim. It was now considerably after seven o'clock, and perhaps an hour, or at most an hour and a half, would bring them to the city gates. All hearts began to beat high with expectation, and hopes were loudly and confidently expressed through every part of the crowd that the danger might now be considered as past. Suddenly, as if expressly to rebuke the too presumptuous confidence of those who were thus thoughtlessly sanguine, the blare of a trumpet was heard from a different quarter of the forest, and about two miles to the right of the city. Every eye was fastened eagerly upon the spot from which the notes issued. Probably the signal had proceeded from a small party in advance of a greater; for in the same direction, but at a much greater distance, perhaps not less than three miles in the rear of the trumpet, a very large body of horse was now descried coming on at a great pace upon the line already indicated by the trumpet. The extent of the column might be estimated by the long array of torches, which were carried apparently by every fourth or fifth man; and that they were horsemen was manifest from the very rapid pace at which they advanced.

At this spectacle a cry of consternation ran along the whole walls of Klosterheim. Here then at last were coming the spoilers and butchers of their friends; for the road upon which they were advancing issued at right angles into that

upon which the travellers, apparently unwarned of their danger, were moving. The hideous scene of carnage would possibly pass immediately below their own eyes; for the point of junction between the two roads was directly commanded by the eye from the city walls; and, upon computing the apparent proportions of speed between the two parties, it seemed likely enough that upon this very ground, the best fitted of any that could have been selected, in a scenical sense, as a stage for bringing a spectacle below the eyes of Klosterheim, the most agitating of spectacles would be exhibited,—friends and kinsmen engaged in mortal struggle with remorseless freebooters, under circumstances which denied to themselves any chance of offering assistance.

Exactly at this point of time arose a dense mist, which wrapped the whole forest in darkness, and withdrew from the eyes of the agitated Klosterheimers friends and foes alike. They continued, however, to occupy the walls, endeavouring to penetrate the veil which now concealed the fortunes of their travelling friends by mere energy and intensity of attention. The mist meantime did not disperse, but rather continued to deepen: the two parties, however, gradually drew so much nearer that some judgment could be at length formed of their motions and position merely by the ear. From the stationary character of the sounds, and the continued recurrence of charges and retreats sounded upon the trumpet, it became evident that the travellers and the enemy had at length met, and too probable that they were engaged in a sanguinary combat. Anxiety had now reached its utmost height; and some were obliged to leave the walls, or were carried away by their friends, under the effects of overwrought sensibility.

Ten o'clock had now struck, and for some time the sounds had been growing sensibly weaker; and at last it was manifest that the two parties had separated, and that one at least was moving off from the scene of action; and, as the sounds grew feebler and feebler, there could be no doubt that it was the enemy who was drawing off into the distance from the field of battle.

The enemy! ay, but how? Under what circumstances? As victor? Perhaps even as the captor of their friends?

Or, if not, and he were really retreating as a fugitive and beaten foe, with what hideous sacrifices on the part of their friends might not that result have been purchased?

Long and dreary was the interval before these questions could be answered. Full three hours had elapsed since the last sound of a trumpet had been heard: it was now one o'clock, and as yet no trace of the travellers had been discovered in any quarter. The most hopeful began to despond; and general lamentations prevailed throughout Klosterheim.

Suddenly, however, a dull sound arose within a quarter of a mile from the city gate, as of some feeble attempt to blow a blast upon a trumpet. In five minutes more a louder blast was sounded close to the gate. Questions were joyfully put, and as joyfully answered. The usual precautions were rapidly gone through: and, the officer of the watch being speedily satisfied as to the safety of the measure, the gates were thrown open, and the unfortunate travellers, exhausted by fatigue, hardships, and suffering of every description, were at length admitted into the bosom of a friendly town.

The spectacle was hideous which the long cavalcade exhibited as it wound up the steep streets which led to the market-place. Waggons fractured and splintered in every direction, upon which were stretched numbers of gallant soldiers, with wounds hastily dressed, from which the blood had poured in streams upon their gay habiliments; horses, whose limbs had been mangled by the sabre; and coaches or caleches loaded with burthens of dead and dying; these were amongst the objects which occupied the van in the line of march, as the travellers defiled through Klosterheim. The vast variety of faces, dresses, implements of war, or ensigns of rank, thrown together in the confusion of night and retreat, illuminated at intervals by bright streams of light from torches or candles in the streets, or at the windows of the houses, composed a picture which resembled the chaos of a dream, rather than any ordinary spectacle of human life.

In the market-place the whole party were gradually assembled, and there it was intended that they should receive the billets for their several quarters. But such was

the pressure of friends and relatives gathering from all directions, to salute and welcome the objects of their affectionate anxiety, or to inquire after their fate,—so tumultuous was the conflict of grief and joy (and not seldom in the very same group),—that for a long time no authority could control the violence of public feeling, or enforce the arrangements which had been adopted for the night. Nor was it even easy to learn, where the questions were put by so many voices at once, what had been the history of the night. It was at length, however, collected, that they had been met and attacked with great fury by Holkerstein, or a party acting under one of his lieutenants. Their own march had been so warily conducted after nightfall that this attack did not find them unprepared. A barrier of coaches and waggons had been speedily formed in such an arrangement as to cripple the enemy's movements, and to neutralize great part of his superiority in the quality of his horses. The engagement, however, had been severe; and the enemy's attack, though many times baffled, had been as often renewed, until at length, the young general Maximilian, seeing that the affair tended to no apparent termination, that the bloodshed was great, and that the horses were beginning to knock up under the fatigue of such severe service, had brought up the very *élite* of his reserve, placed himself at their head, and, making a dash expressly at their leader, had the good fortune to cut him down. The desperateness of the charge, added to the loss of their leader, had intimidated the enemy, who now began to draw off as from an enterprise which was likely to cost them more blood than a final success could have rewarded. Unfortunately, however, Maximilian, disabled by a severe wound, and entangled by his horse amongst the enemy, had been carried off a prisoner. In the course of the battle all their torches had been extinguished; and this circumstance, as much as the roughness of the road, the ruinous condition of their carriages and appointments, and their own exhaustion, had occasioned their long delay in reaching Klosterheim after the battle was at an end. Signals they had not ventured to make; for they were naturally afraid of drawing upon their track any fresh party of marauders by so open a warning of their course as the sound of a trumpet.

These explanations were rapidly dispersed through Klosterheim ; party after party drew off to their quarters ; and at length the agitated city was once again restored to peace. The Lady Paulina had been amongst the first to retire. She was met by the Lady Abbess of a principal convent in Klosterheim, to whose care she had been recommended by the Emperor. The Landgrave also had furnished her with a guard of honour ; but all expressions of respect, or even of kindness, seemed thrown away upon her, so wholly was she absorbed in grief for the capture of Maximilian, and in gloomy anticipation of his impending fate.

Chapter VII

The city of Klosterheim was now abandoned to itself, and strictly shut up within its own walls. All roaming beyond those limits was now indeed forbidden even more effectually by the sword of the enemy than by the edicts of the Landgrave. War was manifestly gathering in its neighbourhood. Little towns and castles within a range of seventy miles, on almost every side, were now daily occupied by Imperial or Swedish troops. Not a week passed without some news of fresh military accessions, or of skirmishes between parties of hostile foragers. Through the whole adjacent country, spite of the severe weather, bodies of armed men were weaving to and fro, fast as a weaver's shuttle. The forest rang with alarums ; and sometimes, under gleams of sunshine, the leafless woods seemed on fire with the restless splendour of spear and sword, morion and breastplate, or the glittering equipments of the Imperial cavalry. Couriers, or Bohemian gipsies, which latter were a class of people at this time employed by all sides as spies or messengers, continually stole in with secret despatches to the Landgrave, or (under the colour of bringing public news, and the reports of military movements) to execute some private mission for rich employers in town ; sometimes making even this clandestine business but a cover to other purposes, too nearly connected with treason, or reputed treason, to admit of any but oral communication.

What were the ulterior views in this large accumulation

of military force, no man pretended to know. A great battle, for various reasons, was not expected. But changes were so sudden, and the counsels of each day so often depended on the accidents of the morning, that an entire campaign might easily be brought on, or the whole burthen of war for years to come might be transferred to this quarter of the land, without causing any very great surprise. Meantime, enough was done already to give a full foretaste of war and its miseries to this sequestered nook—so long unvisited by that hideous scourge.

In the forest, where the inhabitants were none, excepting those who lived upon the borders, and small establishments of the Landgrave's servants at different points, for executing the duties of the forest or the chase, this change expressed itself chiefly by the tumultuous uproar of the wild deer, upon whom a murderous war was kept up by parties detached daily from remote and opposite quarters to collect provisions for the half-starving garrisons, so recently, and with so little previous preparation, multiplied on the forest skirts. For, though the country had been yet unexhausted by war, too large a proportion of the tracts adjacent to the garrisons were in a wild silvan condition to afford any continued supplies to so large and sudden an increase of the population; more especially as, under the rumours of this change, every walled town in a compass of one hundred miles, many of them capable of resisting a sudden *coup-de-main*, and resolutely closing their gates upon either party, had already possessed themselves by purchase of all the surplus supplies which the country yielded. In such a state of things, the wild deer became an object of valuable consideration to all parties, and a murderous war was made upon them from every side of the forest. From the city walls they were seen in sweeping droves, flying before the Swedish cavalry for a course of ten, fifteen, or even thirty miles, until headed, and compelled to turn by another party breaking suddenly from a covert where they had been waiting their approach. Sometimes it would happen that this second party proved to be a body of Imperialists, who were carried by the ardour of the chase into the very centre of their enemies before either was aware of any hostile approach.

Then, according to circumstances, came sudden flight or tumultuary skirmish; the woods rang with the hasty summons of the trumpet; the deer reeled off aslant from the furious shock, and, benefiting for the moment by those fierce hostilities, originally the cause of their persecution, fled far away from the scene of strife; and not unfrequently came thundering beneath the city walls, and reporting to the spectators above, by their agitation and affrighted eyes, those tumultuous disturbances in some remoter part of the forest, which had already reached them in an imperfect way by the interrupted and recurring echoes of the points of war—charges or retreats—sounded upon the trumpet.

But, whilst on the outside of her walls Klosterheim beheld even this unpopulous region all alive with military licence and outrage, she suffered no violence from either party herself. This immunity she owed to her peculiar political situation. The Emperor had motives for conciliating the city; the Swedes for conciliating the Landgrave: indeed they were supposed to have made a secret alliance with him, for purposes known only to the contracting parties. And the difference between the two patrons was simply this, that the Emperor was sincere, and, if not disinterested, had an interest concurring with that of Klosterheim, in the paternal protection which he offered; whereas the Swedes in this, as in all their arrangements, regarding Germany as a foreign country, looked only to the final advantages of Sweden or its German dependencies, and to the weight which such alliances would procure them in a general pacification. And hence, in the war which both combined to make upon the forest, the one party professed to commit spoil upon the Landgrave, as distinguished from the city; whilst the Swedish allies of that prince prosecuted their ravages in the Landgrave's name, as essential to the support of his cause.

For the present, however, the Swedes were the preponderant party in the neighbourhood; they had fortified the chateau of Falkenberg, and made it a very strong military post; at the same time, however, sending in to Klosterheim whatsoever was valuable amongst the furniture of that

establishment, with a care which of itself proclaimed the footing upon which they were anxious to stand with the Landgrave.

Encouraged by the vicinity of his military friends, that Prince now began to take a harsher tone in Klosterheim. The minor Princes of Germany at that day were all tyrants in virtue of their privileges; and, if in some rarer cases they exercised these privileges in a forbearing spirit, their subjects were well aware that they were indebted for this extraordinary indulgence to the temper and gracious nature of the individual, not to the firm protection of the laws. But the most reasonable and mildest of the German Princes had been little taught at that day to brook opposition. And the Landgrave was by nature, and the gloominess of his constitutional temperament, of all men the last to learn that lesson readily. He had already met with just sufficient opposition from the civic body and the university interest to excite his passion for revenge. Ample indemnification he determined upon for his wounded pride; and he believed that the time and circumstances were now matured for favouring his most vindictive schemes. The Swedes were at hand; and a slight struggle with the citizens would remove all obstacles to their admission into the garrison; though, for some private reasons, he wished to abstain from this extremity, if it should prove possible. Maximilian also was absent, and might never return. The rumour was even that he was killed; and, though the caution of Adorni and the Landgrave led them to a hesitating reliance upon what might be a political fabrication of the opposite party, yet at all events he was detained from Klosterheim by some pressing necessity; and the period of his absence, whether long or short, the Landgrave resolved to improve in such a way as should make his return unavailing.

Of Maximilian the Landgrave had no personal knowledge; he had not so much as seen him. But by his spies and intelligencers he was well aware that he had been the chief combiner and animater of the Imperial party against himself in the university, and by his presence had given life and confidence to that party in the city which did not expressly acknowledge him as their head. He was aware of

the favour which Maximilian enjoyed with the Emperor, and knew in general, from public report, the brilliancy of those military services on which it had been built. That he was likely to prove a formidable opponent, had he continued in Klosterheim, the Landgrave knew too well; and upon the advantage over him which he had now gained, though otherwise it should prove only a temporary one, he determined to found a permanent obstacle to the Emperor's views. As a preliminary step, he prepared to crush all opposition in Klosterheim; a purpose which was equally important to his vengeance and his policy.

This system he opened with a series of tyrannical regulations, some of which gave the more offence that they seemed wholly capricious and insulting. The students were confined to their college bounds, except at stated intervals; were subject to a military muster, or calling over of names, every evening; were required to receive sentinels within the extensive courts of their own college, and at length a small court of guard; with numerous other occasional marks, as opportunities offered, of princely discountenance and anger.

In the university, at that time, from local causes, many young men of rank and family were collected. Those even who had taken no previous part in the cause of the Klosterheimers were now roused to a sense of personal indignity. And, as soon as the light was departed, a large body of them collected at the rooms of Count St. Aldenheim, whose rank promised a suitable countenance to their purpose, whilst his youth seemed a pledge for the requisite activity.

The Count was a younger brother of the Palsgrave of Birkenfeld, and maintained a sumptuous establishment in Klosterheim. Whilst the state of the forest had allowed of hunting, hawking, and other amusements, no man had exhibited so fine a stud of horses. No man had so large a train of servants; no man entertained his friends with such magnificent hospitalities. His generosity, his splendour, his fine person, and the courtesy with which he relieved the humblest people from the oppression of his rank, had given him a popularity amongst the students. His courage had been tried in battle: but, after all, it was doubted whether

he were not of too luxurious a turn to undertake any cause which called for much exertion; for the death of a rich Abbess, who had left the whole of an immense fortune to the Count, as her favourite nephew, had given him another motive for cultivating peaceful pursuits, to which few men were, constitutionally, better disposed.

It was the time of day when the Count was sure to be found at home with a joyous party of friends. Magnificent chandeliers shed light upon a table furnished with every description of costly wines produced in Europe. According to the custom of the times, these were drunk in cups of silver or gold; and an opportunity was thus gained, which St. Aldenheim had not lost, of making a magnificent display of luxury without ostentation. The ruby wine glittered in the jewelled goblet which the Count had raised to his lips at the very moment when the students entered.

"Welcome, friends," said the Count St. Aldenheim, putting down his cup, "welcome always; but never more than at this hour, when wine and good fellowship teach us to know the value of our youth."

"Thanks, Count, from all of us. But the fellowship we seek at present must be of another temper; our errand is of business."

"Then, friends, it shall rest until to-morrow. Not for the papacy, to which my good aunt would have raised a ladder for me of three steps,—Abbot, Bishop, Cardinal,—would I renounce the Tokay of to-night for the business of to-morrow. Come, gentlemen, let us drink my aunt's health."

"Memory, you would say, Count."

"Memory, most learned friend; you are right: Ah! gentlemen, she was a woman worthy to be had in remembrance: for she invented a capital plaster for gunshot wounds; and a jollier old fellow over a bottle of Tokay there is not at this day in Suabia, or in the Swedish camp. And that reminds me to ask, gentlemen, have any of you heard that Gustavus Horn is expected at Falkenberg? Such news is astir; and be sure of this—that, in such a case, we have cracked crowns to look for. I know the man. And many a hard night's watching he has cost me; for which, if you please, gentlemen, we will drink his health."

"But our business, dear Count ——"

"Shall wait, please God, until to-morrow; for this is the time when man and beast repose."

"And truly, Count, we are like—as you take things—to be numbered with the last. Fie, Count St. Aldenheim! are you the man that would have us suffer those things tamely which the Landgrave has begun?"

"And what now hath his Serenity been doing? Doth he meditate to abolish burgundy? If so, my faith! but we are, as you observe, little above the brutes. Or, peradventure, will he forbid laughing,—his highness being little that way given himself?"

"Count St. Aldenheim! it pleases you to jest. But we are assured that you know as well as we, and relish no better, the insults which the Landgrave is heaping upon us all. For example, the sentinel at your own door—doubtless you marked him? How liked you him?—"

"Methought he looked cold and blue. So I sent him a goblet of Johannisberg."

"You did? and the little court of guard—you have seen *that*? and Colonel Von Aremberg, how think you of him?"

"Why surely now he's a handsome man: pity he wears so fiery a scarf! Shall we drink his health, gentlemen?"

"Health to the great fiend first!"

"As you please, gentlemen: it is for you to regulate the precedency. But, at least,

> Here's to my aunt—the jolly old sinner,
> That fasted each day, from breakfast to dinner!
> Saw any man yet such an orthodox fellow,
> In the morning when sober, in the evening when mellow?
> Saw any man yet," &c.

"Count, farewell!"—interrupted the leader of the party; and all turned round indignantly to leave the room.

"Farewell, gentlemen, as you positively will not drink my aunt's health; though, after all, she was a worthy fellow; and her plaster for gunshot wounds, ——"

But with that word the door closed upon the Count's farewell words. Suddenly taking up a hat which lay upon the ground, he exclaimed, "Ah! behold! one of my friends has left his hat. Truly he may chance to want it on a frosty

night." And, so saying, he hastily rushed after the party, whom he found already on the steps of the portico. Seizing the hand of the leader, he whispered,—

"Friend! do you know me so little as to apprehend my jesting in a serious sense? Know that two of those whom you saw on my right hand are spies of the Landgrave. Their visit to me, I question not, was purposely made to catch some such discoveries as you, my friends, would too surely have thrown in their way, but for my determined rattling. At this time, I must not stay. Come again after midnight—farewell."

And then in a voice to reach his guests within, he shouted, "Gentlemen, my aunt, the Abbot of Ingelheim,—Abbess, I would say,—held that her spurs were for her heels, and her beaver for her head. Whereupon, Baron, I return you your hat."

Meantime, the two insidious intelligencers of the Landgrave returned to the palace with discoveries, not so ample as they were on the point of surprising, but sufficient to earn thanks for themselves, and to guide the counsels of their master.

Chapter VIII

That same night a full meeting of the most distinguished students was assembled at the mansion of Count St. Aldenheim. Much stormy discussion arose upon two points; first, upon the particular means by which they were to pursue an end upon which all were unanimous. Upon that, however, they were able for the present to arrive at a preliminary arrangement with sufficient harmony. This was to repair in a body, with Count St. Aldenheim at their head, to the castle, and there to demand an audience of the Landgrave, at which a strong remonstrance was to be laid before his highness, and their determination avowed to repel the indignities thrust upon them with their united forces. On the second they were more at variance. It happened that many of the persons present, and amongst them Count St. Aldenheim, were friends of Maximilian. A few, on the other hand, there were who, either from jealousy of his distinguished merit, hated him, or, as good citizens of Klosterheim, and con-

nected by old family ties with the interests of that town, were disposed to charge Maximilian with ambitious views of private aggrandizement at the expense of the city, grounded upon the Emperor's favour, or upon a supposed marriage with some lady of the Imperial house. For the story of Paulina's and Maximilian's mutual attachment had transpired through many of the travellers ; but with some circumstances of fiction. In defending Maximilian upon those charges, his friends had betrayed a natural warmth at the injustice offered to his character ; and the liveliness of the dispute on this point had nearly ended in a way fatal to their unanimity on the immediate question at issue. Good sense, however, and indignation at the Landgrave, finally brought them round again to their first resolution ; and they separated with the unanimous intention of meeting at noon on the following day for the purpose of carrying it into effect.

But their unanimity on this point was of little avail ; for, at an early hour on the following morning, every one of those who had been present at the meeting was arrested by a file of soldiers on a charge of conspiracy, and marched off to one of the city prisons. The Count St. Aldenheim was himself the sole exception ; and this was a distinction odious to his generous nature, as it drew upon him a cloud of suspicion. He was sensible that he would be supposed to owe his privilege to some discovery or act of treachery, more or less, by which he had merited the favour of the Landgrave. The fact was that in the indulgence shown to the Count no motive had influenced the Landgrave but a politic consideration of the great favour and influence which the Count's brother, the Palsgrave, at this moment enjoyed in the camp of his own Swedish allies. On this principle of policy, the Landgrave contented himself with placing St. Aldenheim under a slight military confinement to his own house, under the guard of a few sentinels posted in his hall.

For *him*, therefore, under the powerful protection which he enjoyed elsewhere, there was no great anxiety entertained. But for the rest, many of whom had no friends, or friends who did them the ill service of enemies, being in fact regarded as enemies by the Landgrave and his council, serious fears were entertained by the whole city. Their situation

was evidently critical. The Landgrave had them in his power. He was notoriously a man of gloomy and malignant passions; had been educated, as all European princes then were, in the notions of a plenary and despotic right over the lives of his subjects, in any case where they lifted their presumptuous thoughts to the height of controlling the Sovereign; and, even in circumstances which to his own judgment might seem to confer much less discretionary power over the rights of prisoners, he had been suspected of directing the course of law and of punishment into channels that would not brook the public knowledge. Darker dealings were imputed to him in the popular opinion. Gloomy suspicions were muttered at the fireside, which no man dared openly to avow; and in the present instance the conduct of the Landgrave was every way fitted to fall in with the worst of the public fears. At one time he talked of bringing his prisoners to a trial; at another, he countermanded the preparations which he had made with that view. Sometimes he spoke of banishing them in a body; and again he avowed his intention to deal with their crime as treason. The result of this moody and capricious tyranny was to inspire the most vague and gloomy apprehensions into the minds of the prisoners, and to keep their friends, with the whole city of Klosterheim, in a feverish state of insecurity.

This state of things lasted for nearly three weeks; but at length a morning of unexpected pleasure dawned upon the city. The prisoners were in one night all released. In half an hour the news ran over the town and the university; multitudes hastened to the college, anxious to congratulate the prisoners on their deliverance from the double afflictions of a dungeon and of continual insecurity. Mere curiosity also prompted some, who took but little interest in the prisoners or their cause, to inquire into the circumstances of so abrupt and unexpected an act of grace. One principal court in the college was filled with those who had come upon this errand of friendly interest or curiosity. Nothing was to be seen but earnest and delighted faces, offering or acknowledging congratulation; nothing to be heard but the language of joy and pleasure—friendly or affectionate, according to the sex or relation of the speaker. Some were talking of pro-

curing passports for leaving the town—some anticipating that this course would not be left to their own choice, but imposed, as the price of his clemency, by the Landgrave ;—all in short was hubbub and joyous uproar, when suddenly a file of the city guard, commanded by an officer, made their way rudely and violently through the crowd, advancing evidently to the spot where the liberated prisoners were collected in a group. At that moment the Count St. Aldenheim was offering his congratulations. The friends to whom he spoke were too confident in his honour and integrity to have felt even one moment's misgiving upon the true causes which had sheltered him from the Landgrave's wrath, and had thus given him a privilege so invidious in the eyes of those who knew him not, and on that account so hateful in his own. They knew his unimpeachable fidelity to the cause and themselves, and were anxiously expressing their sense of it by the warmth of their salutations at the very moment when the city guard appeared. The Count, on his part, was gaily reminding them to come that evening and fulfil their engagement to drink his aunt of jovial memory in her own Johannisberg, when the guard, shouldering aside the crowd, advanced, and, surrounding the group of students, in an instant laid the hands of summary arrest each upon the gentleman who stood next him. The petty officer who commanded made a grasp at one of the most distinguished in dress, and seized rudely upon the gold chain depending from his neck. St. Aldenheim, who happened at the moment to be in conversation with this individual, stung with a sudden indignation at the ruffian eagerness of the men in thus abusing the privileges of their office, and unable to control the generous ardour of his nature, met this brutal outrage with a sudden blow at the officer's face, levelled with so true an aim that it stretched him at his length upon the ground. No terrors of impending vengeance, had they been a thousand times stronger than they were, could at this moment have availed to stifle the cry of triumphant pleasure—long, loud, and unfaltering—which indignant sympathy with the oppressed extorted from the crowd. The pain and humiliation of the blow, exalted into a maddening intensity by this popular shout of exultation, quickened the officer's rage into an apparent frenzy. With

white lips, and half suffocated with the sudden revulsion of passion, natural enough to one who had never before encountered even a momentary overture at opposition to the authority with which he was armed, and for the first time in his life found his own brutalities thrown back resolutely in his teeth, the man rose, and, by signs rather than the inarticulate sounds which he meant for words, pointed the violence of his party upon the Count St. Aldenheim. With halberds bristling around him, the gallant young nobleman was loudly summoned to surrender ; but he protested indignantly, drawing his sword and placing himself in an attitude of defence, that he would die a thousand deaths sooner than surrender the sword of his father, the Palsgrave, a Prince of the Empire, of unspotted honour, and most ancient descent, into the hands of a jailer.

"Jailer!" exclaimed the officer, almost howling with passion.

"Why, then, captain of jailers, lieutenant, anspessade, or what you will. What else than a jailer is he that sits watch upon the prison-doors of honourable cavaliers?" Another shout of triumph applauded St. Aldenheim ; for the men who discharged the duties of the city guard at that day, or "petty guard," as it was termed, corresponding in many of their functions to the modern police, were viewed with contempt by all parties ; and most of all by the military, though in some respects assimilated to them by discipline and costume. They were industriously stigmatized as jailers ; for which there was the more ground, as their duties did in reality associate them pretty often with the jailer ; and in other respects they were a dissolute and ferocious body of men, gathered not out of the citizens, but many foreign deserters, or wretched runagates from the jail, or from the justice of the Provost-Marshal in some distant camp. Not a man, probably, but was liable to be reclaimed in some or other quarter of Germany as a capital delinquent. Sometimes, even, they were actually detected, claimed, and given up to the pursuit of justice, when it happened that the subjects of their criminal acts were weighty enough to sustain an energetic inquiry. Hence their reputation became worse than scandalous: the mingled infamy of their calling, and

the houseless condition of wretchedness which had made it worth their acceptance, combined to overwhelm them with public scorn ; and this public abhorrence, which at any rate awaited them, mere desperation led them too often to countenance and justify by their conduct.

"Captain of jailers ! do your worst, I say," again ejaculated St. Aldenheim. Spite of his blinding passion, the officer hesitated to precipitate himself into a personal struggle with the Count, and thus perhaps afford his antagonist an occasion for a further triumph. But loudly and fiercely he urged on his followers to attack him. These again, not partaking in the personal wrath of their leader, even whilst pressing more and more closely upon St. Aldenheim, and calling upon him to surrender, scrupled to inflict a wound, or too marked an outrage, upon a cavalier whose rank was known to the whole city, and of late most advantageously known for his own interests, by the conspicuous immunity which it had procured him from the Landgrave. In vain did the commanding-officer insist, in vain did the Count defy,—menaces from neither side availed to urge the guard into any outrage upon the person of one who might have it in his power to retaliate so severely upon themselves. They continued obstinately at a stand, simply preventing his escape, when suddenly the tread of horses' feet arose upon the ear, and through a long vista were discovered a body of cavalry from the castle coming up at a charging pace to the main entrance of the college. Without pulling up on the outside, as hitherto they had always done, they expressed sufficiently the altered tone of the Landgrave's feelings towards the old chartered interests of Klosterheim, by plunging through the great archway of the college-gates ; and then, making way at the same furious pace through the assembled crowds, who broke rapidly away to the right and to the left, they reined up directly abreast of the city guard and their prisoners.

"Colonel Von Aremberg !" said St. Aldenheim, "I perceive your errand. To a soldier I surrender myself ; to this tyrant of dungeons, who has betrayed more men, and cheated more gibbets of their due, than ever he said *aves*, I will never lend an ear, though he should bear the orders of every Landgrave in Germany."

"You do well," replied the Colonel; "but for this man, Count, he bears no orders from any Landgrave, nor will ever again bear orders from the Landgrave of X——. Gentlemen, you are all my prisoners; and you will accompany me to the castle. Count St. Aldenheim, I am sorry that there is no longer an exemption for yourself. Please to advance. If it will be any gratification to you, these men" (pointing to the city guard) "are prisoners also."

Here was a revolution of fortune that confounded everybody. The detested guardians of the city jail were themselves to tenant it; or, by a worse fate still, were to be consigned unpitied, and their case unjudged, to the dark and pestilent dungeons which lay below the Landgrave's castle. A few scattered cries of triumph were heard from the crowd; but they were drowned in a tumult of conflicting feelings. As human creatures, fallen under the displeasure of a despot with a judicial power of torture to enforce his investigations, even *they* claimed some compassion. But there arose, to call off attention from these less dignified objects of the public interest, a long train of gallant cavaliers, restored so capriciously to liberty, in order, as it seemed, to give the greater poignancy and bitterness to the instant renewal of their captivity. This was the very frenzy of despotism in its very moodiest state of excitement. Many began to think the Landgrave mad. If so, what a dreadful fate might be anticipated for the sons or representatives of so many noble families, gallant soldiers the greater part of them, with a nobleman of princely blood at their head, lying under the displeasure of a gloomy and infuriated tyrant, with unlimited means of executing the bloodiest suggestions of his vengeance! Then, in what way had the guardians of the jails come to be connected with any even imaginary offence? Supposing the Landgrave insane, his agents were not so; Colonel Von Aremberg was a man of shrewd and penetrating understanding; and this officer had clearly spoken in the tone of one who, whilst announcing the sentence of another, sympathizes entirely with the justice and necessity of its harshness.

Something dropped from the miserable leader of the city guard, in his first confusion and attempt at self-defence, which rather increased than explained the mystery. "The

Masque! the Masque!" This was the word which fell at intervals upon the ear of the listening crowd, as he sometimes directed his words in the way of apology and deprecation to Colonel Von Aremberg, who did not vouchsafe to listen, or of occasional explanation and discussion, as it was partially kept up between himself and one of his nearest partners in the imputed transgression. Two or three there might be seen in the crowd whose looks avowed some nearer acquaintance with this mysterious allusion than it would have been safe to acknowledge. But, for the great body of spectators who accompanied the prisoners and their escort to the gates of the castle, it was pretty evident by their inquiring looks, and the fixed expression of wonder upon their features, that the whole affair, and its circumstances, were to them equally a subject of mystery for what was past, and of blind terror for what was to come.

Chapter IX

The cavalcade, with its charge of prisoners, and its attendant train of spectators, halted at the gates of the *schloss*. This vast and antique pile had now come to be surveyed with dismal and revolting feelings, as the abode of a sanguinary despot. The dungeons and labyrinths of its tortuous passages, its gloomy halls of audience, with the vast corridors which surmounted the innumerable flights of stairs—some noble, spacious, and in the Venetian taste, capable of admitting the march of an army—some spiral, steep, and so unusually narrow as to exclude two persons walking abreast; these, together with the numerous chapels erected in it to different saints by devotees, male or female, in the families of forgotten Landgraves through four centuries back; and finally the tribunals, or *gericht-kammern*, for dispensing justice, criminal or civil, to the city and territorial dependencies of Klosterheim;—all united to compose a body of impressive images, hallowed by great historical remembrances, or traditional stories, that from infancy to age dwelt upon the feelings of the Klosterheimers. Terror and superstitious dread predominated undoubtedly in the total impression; but the gentle virtues exhibited by a series of princes who had made this

their favourite residence naturally enough terminated in mellowing the sternness of such associations into a religious awe, not without its own peculiar attractions. But at present, under the harsh and repulsive character of the reigning Prince, everything took a new colour from his ungenial habits. The superstitious legends which had so immemorially peopled the *schloss* with spectral apparitions now revived in their earliest strength. Never was Germany more dedicated to superstition in every shape than at this period. The wild tumultuous times, and the slight tenure upon which all men held their lives, naturally threw their thoughts much upon the other world; and communications with that, or its burthen of secrets, by every variety of agencies, ghosts, divination, natural magic, palmistry, or astrology, found in every city of the land more encouragement than ever.

It cannot, therefore, be surprising that the well-known apparition of the White Lady (a legend which affected Klosterheim through the fortunes of its Landgraves, no less than several other princely houses of Germany, descended from the same original stock) should about this time have been seen in the dusk of the evening at some of the upper windows in the castle, and once in a lofty gallery of the great chapel during the vesper service. This lady, generally known by the name of the White Lady Agnes, or *Lady Agnes of Weissemburg*, is supposed to have lived in the 13th or 14th century; and from that time, even to our own days, the current belief is, that on the eve of any great crisis of good or evil fortune impending over the three or four illustrious houses of Germany which trace their origin from her, she makes her appearance in some conspicuous apartment, great baronial hall or chapel, of their several palaces, sweeping along in white robes and a voluminous train. Her appearance of late in the *schloss* of Klosterheim, confidently believed by the great body of the people, was hailed with secret pleasure, as forerunning some great change in the Landgrave's family,—which was but another name for better days to themselves, whilst of necessity it menaced some great evil to the Prince himself. Hope, therefore, was predominant in their prospects, and in the supernatural intimations of coming changes;—yet awe and deep religious feeling mingled

with their hope. Of chastisement approaching to the Landgrave they felt assured,—some dim religious judgment, like that which brooded over the house of Œdipus, was now at hand,—that was the universal impression. His gloomy asceticism of life seemed to argue secret crimes,—these were to be brought to light ;—for these, and for his recent tyranny, prosperous as it had seemed for a moment, chastisements were now impending ; and something of the awe which belonged to a prince so marked out for doom and fatal catastrophe seemed to attach itself to his mansion,—more especially as it was there only that the signs and portents of the coming woe had revealed themselves in the apparition of the White Lady.

Under this superstitious impression, many of the spectators paused at the entrance of the castle, and lingered in the portal, though presuming that the chamber of justice, according to the frank old usage of Germany, was still open to all comers. Of this notion they were speedily disabused by the sudden retreat of the few who had penetrated into the first antechamber. These persons were harshly repelled in a contumelious manner, and read to the astonished citizens another lesson upon the new arts of darkness and concealment with which the Landgrave found it necessary to accompany his new acts of tyranny.

Von Aremberg and his prisoners, thus left alone in one of the antechambers, waited no long time before they were summoned to the presence of the Landgrave.

After pacing along a number of corridors, all carpeted so as to return no sound to their footsteps, they arrived in a little hall, from which a door suddenly opened, upon a noiseless signal exchanged with an usher outside, and displayed before them a long gallery, with a table and a few seats arranged at the further end. Two gentlemen were seated at the table, anxiously examining papers,—in one of whom it was easy to recognise the wily glance of the Italian minister ; the other was the Landgrave.

This Prince was now on the verge of fifty, strikingly handsome in his features, and of imposing presence, from the union of a fine person with manners unusually dignified. No man understood better the art of restraining his least

governable impulses of anger or malignity within the decorums of his rank. And even his worst passions, throwing a gloomy rather than terrific air upon his features, served less to alarm and revolt than to impress the sense of secret distrust. Of late indeed, from the too evident indications of the public hatred, his sallies of passion had become wilder and more ferocious, and his self-command less habitually conspicuous. But in general a gravity of insidious courtesy disguised from all but penetrating eyes the treacherous purpose of his heart.

The Landgrave bowed to the Count St. Aldenheim ; and, pointing to a chair, begged him to understand that he wished to do nothing inconsistent with his regard for the Palsgrave his brother, and would be content with his parole of honour to pursue no further any conspiracy against himself, in which he might too thoughtlessly have engaged, and with his retirement from the city of Klosterheim.

The Count St. Aldenheim replied that he and all the other cavaliers present, according to his belief, stood upon the same footing : that they had harboured no thought of conspiracy, unless that name could attach to a purpose of open expostulation with his Highness on the outraged privileges of their corporation as a university : that he wished not for any distinction of treatment in a case when all were equal offenders, or none at all : and, finally, that he believed the sentence of exile from Klosterheim would be cheerfully accepted by all, or most, of those present.

Adorni, the minister, shook his head, and glanced significantly at the Landgrave during this answer. The Landgrave coldly replied that, if he could suppose the Count to speak sincerely, it was evident that he was little aware to what length his companions, or some of them, had pushed their plots. "Here are the proofs!" and he pointed to the papers.

"And now, gentlemen," said he, turning to the students, "I marvel that you, being cavaliers of family, and doubtless holding yourselves men of honour, should beguile these poor knaves into certain ruin, whilst yourselves could reap nothing but a brief mockery of the authority which you could not hope to evade."

Thus called upon, the students and the city-guard told

their tale; in which no contradictions could be detected. The city prison was not particularly well secured against attacks from without. To prevent, therefore, any sudden attempt at a rescue, the guard kept watch by turns. One man watched two hours, traversing the different passages of the prison; and was then relieved. At three o'clock on the preceding night, pacing a winding lobby, brightly illuminated, the man who kept that watch was suddenly met by a person wearing a masque, and armed at all points. His surprise and consternation were great, and the more so as the steps of The Masque were soundless, though the floor was a stone one. The guard, but slightly prepared to meet an attack, would, however, have resisted or raised an alarm; but The Masque, instantly levelling a pistol at his head with one hand, with the other had thrown open the door of an empty cell, indicating to the man by signs that he must enter it. With this intimation he had necessarily complied; and The Masque had immediately turned the key upon him. Of what followed he knew nothing, until aroused by his comrades setting him at liberty, after some time had been wasted in searching for him.

The students had a pretty uniform tale to report. A Masque, armed *cap-à-pié* as described by the guard, had visited each of their cells in succession; had instructed them by signs to dress; and then, pointing to the door, by a series of directions all communicated in the same dumb show, had assembled them together, thrown open the prison door, and, pointing to their college, had motioned them thither. This motion they had seen no cause to disobey, presuming their dismissal to be according to the mode which best pleased his Highness, and not ill-pleased at finding so peaceful a termination to a summons which at first, from its mysterious shape and the solemn hour of night, they had understood as tending to some more formidable issue.

It was observed that neither the Landgrave nor his minister treated this report of so strange a transaction with the scorn which had been anticipated. Both listened attentively, and made minute inquiries as to every circumstance of the dress and appointments of the mysterious Masque. What was his height? By what road, or in what

direction, had he disappeared? These questions answered, his Highness and his minister consulted a few minutes together, and then, turning to Von Aremberg, bade him for the present dismiss the prisoners to their homes,—an act of grace which seemed likely to do him service at the present crisis,—but at the same time to take sufficient security for their reappearance. This done, the whole body were liberated.

Chapter X

All Klosterheim was confounded by the story of the mysterious Masque. For the story had been rapidly dispersed: and on the same day it was made known in another shape. A notice was affixed to the walls of several public places in these words:—

"Landgrave, beware! henceforth not you, but I, govern in Klosterheim. (Signed) The Masque."

And this was no empty threat. Very soon it became apparent that some mysterious agency was really at work to counteract the Landgrave's designs. Sentinels were carried off from solitary posts. Guards even of a dozen men were silently trepanned from their stations. By and by, other attacks were made, even more alarming, upon domestic security. Was there a burgomaster amongst the citizens who had made himself conspicuously a tool of the Landgrave, or had opposed the Imperial interest? He was carried off in the night-time from his house, and probably from the city. At first this was an easy task. Nobody apprehending any special danger to himself, no special preparations were made to meet it. But, as it soon became apparent in what cause The Masque was moving, every person who knew himself obnoxious to attack took means to face it. Guards were multiplied; arms were repaired in every house; alarm bells were hung. For a time the danger seemed to diminish. The attacks were no longer so frequent. Still, wherever they were attempted, they succeeded just as before. It seemed, in fact, that all the precautions taken had no other effect than to warn The Masque of his own danger, and to

place him more vigilantly on his guard. Aware of new defences rising, it seemed that he waited to see the course they would take; once master of that, he was ready (as it appeared) to contend with them as successfully as before.

Nothing could exceed the consternation of the city. Those even who did not fall within the apparent rule which governed the attacks of The Masque felt a sense of indefinite terror hanging over them. Sleep was no longer safe; the seclusion of a man's private hearth, the secrecy of bedrooms, was no longer a protection. Locks gave way, bars fell, doors flew open, as if by magic, before him. Arms seemed useless. In some instances a party of as many as ten or a dozen persons had been removed without rousing disturbance in the neighbourhood. Nor was this the only circumstance of mystery. Whither he could remove his victims was even more incomprehensible than the means by which he succeeded. All was darkness and fear; and the whole city was agitated with panic.

It began now to be suggested that a nightly guard should be established, having fixed stations or points of rendezvous, and at intervals parading the streets. This was cheerfully assented to; for, after the first week of the mysterious attacks, it began to be observed that the Imperial party were attacked indiscriminately with the Swedish. Many students publicly declared that they had been dogged through a street or two by an armed Masque; others had been suddenly confronted by him in unfrequented parts of the city in the dead of night, and were on the point of being attacked, when some alarm, or the approach of distant footsteps, had caused him to disappear. The students, indeed, more particularly, seemed objects of attack; and, as they were pretty generally attached to the Imperial interest, the motives of The Masque were no longer judged to be political. Hence it happened that the students came forward in a body, and volunteered as members of the nightly guard. Being young, military for the most part in their habits, and trained to support the hardships of night-watching, they seemed peculiarly fitted for the service; and, as the case was no longer of a nature to awaken the suspicions of the Landgrave, they were generally accepted and enrolled, and with the

more readiness as the known friends of that Prince came forward at the same time.

A night-watch was thus established, which promised security to the city, and a respite from their mysterious alarms. It was distributed into eight or ten divisions, posted at different points, whilst a central one traversed the whole city at stated periods, and overlooked the local stations. Such an arrangement was wholly unknown at that time in every part of Germany, and was hailed with general applause.

To the astonishment, however, of everybody, it proved wholly ineffectual. Houses were entered as before; the college chambers proved no sanctuary; indeed, they were attacked with a peculiar obstinacy, which was understood to express a spirit of retaliation for the alacrity of the students in combining for the public protection. People were carried off as before. And continual notices affixed to the gates of the college, the convents, or the *schloss*, with the signature of *The Masque*, announced to the public his determination to persist, and his contempt of the measures organized against him.

The alarm of the citizens now became greater than ever. The danger was one which courage could not face, nor prudence make provision for, nor wiliness evade. All alike, who had once been marked out for attack, sooner or later fell victims to the obstinacy of this mysterious foe. To have received even an individual warning availed them not at all. Sometimes it happened that, having received notice of suspicious circumstances indicating that The Masque had turned his attention upon themselves, they would assemble round their dwellings, or in their very chambers, a band of armed men sufficient to set the danger at defiance. But no sooner had they relaxed in these costly and troublesome arrangements, no sooner was the sense of peril lulled, and an opening made for their unrelenting enemy, than he glided in with his customary success; and in a morning or two after it was announced to the city that they also were numbered with his victims.

Even yet it seemed that something remained in reserve to augment the terrors of the citizens, and push them to excess.

Hitherto there had been no reason to think that any murderous violence had occurred in the mysterious rencontres between The Masque and his victims. But of late, in those houses, or college chambers, from which the occupiers had disappeared, traces of bloodshed were apparent in some instances, and of ferocious conflict in others. Sometimes a profusion of hair was scattered on the ground; sometimes fragments of dress, or splinters of weapons. Everything marked that on both sides, as this mysterious agency advanced, the passions increased in intensity; determination and murderous malignity on the one side, and the fury of resistance on the other.

At length the last consummation was given to the public panic; for, as if expressly to put an end to all doubts upon the spirit in which he conducted his warfare, in one house where the bloodshed had been so great as to argue some considerable loss of life, a notice was left behind in the following terms: "Thus it is that I punish resistance; mercy to a cheerful submission; but henceforth death to the obstinate! —The Masque."

What was to be done? Some counselled a public deprecation of his wrath, addressed to The Masque. But this, had it even offered any chance of succeeding, seemed too abject an act of abasement to become a large city. Under any circumstances, it was too humiliating a confession that, in a struggle with one man (for no more had avowedly appeared upon the scene), they were left defeated and at his mercy. A second party counselled a treaty. Would it not be possible to learn the ultimate objects of The Masque; and, if such as seemed capable of being entertained with honour, to concede to him his demands, in exchange for security to the city, and immunity from future molestation? It was true that no man knew where to seek him: personally he was hidden from their reach; but everybody knew how to find him: he was amongst them; in their very centre; and whatever they might address to him in a public notice would be sure of speedily reaching his eye.

After some deliberation, a summons was addressed to The Masque, and exposed on the college gates, demanding of him a declaration of his purposes, and the price which he

expected for suspending them. The next day an answer appeared in the same situation, avowing the intention of The Masque to come forward with ample explanation of his motives at a proper crisis, till which "more blood must flow in Klosterheim."

Chapter XI

Meantime the Landgrave was himself perplexed and alarmed. Hitherto he had believed himself possessed of all the intrigues, plots, or conspiracies which threatened his influence in the city. Among the students and among the citizens he had many spies, who communicated to him whatsoever they could learn, which was sometimes more than the truth, and sometimes a good deal less. But now he was met by a terrific antagonist, who moved in darkness, careless of his power, inaccessible to his threats, and apparently as reckless as himself of the quality of his means.

Adorni, with all his Venetian subtlety, was now as much at fault as everybody else. In vain had they deliberated together, day after day, upon his probable purposes; in vain had they schemed to intercept his person, or offered high rewards for tracing his retreats. Snares had been laid for him in vain; every wile had proved abortive, every plot had been counterplotted. And both involuntarily confessed that they had now met with their master.

Vexed and confounded, fears for the future struggling with mortification for the past, the Landgrave was sitting, late at night, in the long gallery where he usually held his councils. He was reflecting with anxiety on the peculiarly unpropitious moment at which his new enemy had come upon the stage—the very crisis of the struggle between the Swedish and Imperial interest at Klosterheim, which would ultimately determine his own place and value in the estimate of his new allies. He was not of a character to be easily duped by mystery. Yet he could not but acknowledge to himself that there was something calculated to impress awe, and the sort of fear which is connected with the supernatural, in the sudden appearances, and vanishings as sudden, of The Masque. He came no one could guess

whence, retreated no one could guess whither; was intercepted, and yet eluded arrest; and, if half the stories in circulation could be credited, seemed inaudible in his steps, at pleasure to make himself invisible and impalpable to the very hands stretched out to detain him. Much of this, no doubt, was wilful exaggeration, or the fictions of fears self-deluded. But enough remained, after every allowance, to justify an extraordinary interest in so singular a being; and the Landgrave could not avoid wishing that chance might offer an opportunity to himself of observing him.

Profound silence had for some time reigned throughout the castle. A clock which stood in the room broke it for a moment by striking the quarters; and, raising his eyes, the Landgrave perceived that it was past two. He rose to retire for the night, and stood for a moment musing with one hand resting upon the table. A momentary feeling of awe came across him, as his eyes travelled through the gloom at the lower end of the room, on the sudden thought—that a being so mysterious, and capable of piercing through so many impediments to the interior of every mansion in Klosterheim, was doubtless likely enough to visit the castle; nay, it would be no ways improbable that he should penetrate to this very room. What bars had yet been found sufficient to repel him? And who could pretend to calculate the hour of his visit? This night even might be the time which he would select. Thinking thus, the Landgrave was suddenly aware of a dusky figure entering the room by a door at the lower end. The room had the length and general proportions of a gallery, and the further end was so remote from the candles which stood on the Landgrave's table that the deep gloom was but slightly penetrated by their rays. Light, however, there was, sufficient to display the outline of a figure slowly and inaudibly advancing up the room. It could not be said that the figure advanced stealthily; on the contrary, its motion, carriage, and bearing were in the highest degree dignified and solemn. But the feeling of a stealthy purpose was suggested by the perfect silence of its tread. The motion of a shadow could not be more noiseless. And this circumstance confirmed the Landgrave's first impression, that now he was on the point of

accomplishing his recent wish, and meeting that mysterious being who was the object of so much awe, and the author of so far-spread a panic.

He was right ; it was indeed The Masque, armed *cap-à-pié* as usual. He advanced with an equable and determined step in the direction of the Landgrave. Whether he saw his Highness, who stood a little in the shade of a large cabinet, could not be known ; the Landgrave doubted not that he did. He was a prince of firm nerves by constitution, and of great intrepidity,—yet, as one who shared in the superstitions of his age, he could not be expected entirely to suppress an emotion of indefinite apprehension as he now beheld the solemn approach of a being who, by some unaccountable means, had trepanned so many different individuals from so many different houses, most of them prepared for self-defence, and fenced in by the protection of stone walls, locks, and bars.

The Landgrave, however, lost none of his presence of mind ; and in the midst of his discomposure, as his eye fell upon the habiliments of this mysterious person, and the arms and military accoutrements which he bore, naturally his thoughts settled upon the more earthly means of annoyance which this martial apparition carried about him. The Landgrave was himself unarmed, — he had no arms even within reach,—nor was it possible for him in his present situation very speedily to summon assistance. With these thoughts passing rapidly through his mind, and sensible that, in any view of his nature and powers, the being now in his presence was a very formidable antagonist, the Landgrave could not but feel relieved from a burden of anxious tremors, when he saw The Masque suddenly turn towards a door which opened about half-way up the room, and led into a picture-gallery at right angles with the room in which they both were.

Into the picture-gallery The Masque passed at the same solemn pace, without apparently looking at the Landgrave. This movement seemed to argue either that he purposely declined an interview with the Prince, and *that* might argue fear, or that he had not been aware of his presence ;—either supposition, as implying something of human infirmity,

seemed incompatible with supernatural faculties. Partly upon this consideration, and partly perhaps because he suddenly recollected that the road taken by The Masque would lead him directly past the apartments of the old seneschal, where assistance might be summoned, the Landgrave found his spirits at this moment revive. The consciousness of rank and birth also came to his aid, and that sort of disdain of the aggressor which possesses every man —brave or cowardly alike—within the walls of his own dwelling :—unarmed as he was, he determined to pursue, and perhaps to speak.

The restraints of high breeding, and the ceremonious decorum of his rank, involuntarily checked the Landgrave from pursuing with a hurried pace. He advanced with his habitual gravity of step, so that The Masque was half-way down the gallery before the Prince entered it. This gallery, furnished on each side with pictures, of which some were portraits, was of great length. The Masque and the Prince continued to advance, preserving a pretty equal distance. It did not appear by any sign or gesture that The Masque was aware of the Landgrave's pursuit. Suddenly, however, he paused—drew his sword—halted ; the Landgrave also halted ; then turning half round, and waving with his hand to the Prince so as to solicit his attention, slowly The Masque elevated the point of his sword to the level of a picture—it was the portrait of a young cavalier in a hunting dress, blooming with youth and youthful energy. The Landgrave turned pale, trembled, and was ruefully agitated. The Masque kept his sword in its position for half a minute ; then dropping it, shook his head, and raised his hand with a peculiar solemnity of expression. The Landgrave recovered himself—his features swelled with passion—he quickened his step, and again followed in pursuit.

The Masque, however, had by this time turned out of the gallery into a passage which, after a single curve, terminated in the private room of the seneschal. Believing that his ignorance of the localities was thus leading him on to certain capture, the Landgrave pursued more leisurely. The passage was dimly lighted ; every image floated in a cloudy obscurity ; and, upon reaching the curve, it seemed to the

Landgrave that The Masque was just on the point of entering the seneschal's room. No other door was heard to open; and he felt assured that he had seen the lofty figure of The Masque gliding into that apartment. He again quickened his steps; a light burned within, the door stood ajar; quietly the Prince pushed it open, and entered with the fullest assurance that he should here at length overtake the object of his pursuit.

Great was his consternation upon finding in a room which presented no outlet not a living creature except the elderly seneschal, who lay quietly sleeping in his arm-chair. The first impulse of the Prince was to awaken him roughly, that he might summon aid and co-operate in the search. One glance at a paper upon the table arrested his hand. He saw a name written there, interesting to his fears beyond all others in the world. His eye was riveted as by fascination to the paper. He read one instant. That satisfied him that the old seneschal must be overcome by no counterfeit slumbers, when he could thus surrender a secret of capital importance to the gaze of that eye from which above all others he must desire to screen it. One moment he deliberated with himself; the old man stirred, and muttered in his dreams; the Landgrave seized the paper, and stood irresolute for an instant whether to await his wakening, and authoritatively to claim what so nearly concerned his own interest, or to retreat with it from the room before the old man should be aware of the Prince's visit, or his own loss.

But the seneschal, wearied perhaps with some unusual exertion, had but moved in his chair; again he composed himself to deep slumber, made deeper by the warmth of a hot fire. The raving of the wind, as it whistled round this angle of the *schloss*, drowned all sounds that could have disturbed him. The Landgrave secreted the paper; nor did any sense of his rank and character interpose to check him in an act so unworthy of an honourable cavalier. Whatever crimes he had hitherto committed or authorized, this was perhaps the first instance in which he had offended by an instance of petty knavery. He retired with the stealthy pace of a robber anxious to evade detection; and stole back

to his own apartments with an overpowering interest in the discovery he had made so accidentally, and with an anxiety to investigate it farther, which absorbed for the time all other cares, and banished from his thoughts even The Masque himself, whose sudden appearance and retreat had in fact thrown into his hands the secret which now so exclusively disturbed him.

Chapter XII

Meantime The Masque continued to harass the Landgrave, to baffle many of his wiles, and to neutralize his most politic schemes. In one of the many placards which he affixed to the castle gates, he described the Landgrave as ruling in Klosterheim by day, and himself by night. Sarcasms such as these, together with the practical insults which The Masque continually offered to the Landgrave by foiling his avowed designs, embittered the Prince's existence. The injury done to his political schemes of ambition at this particular crisis was irreparable. One after one, all the agents and tools by whom he could hope to work upon the counsels of the Klosterheim authorities, had been removed. Losing *their* influence, he had lost every prop of his own. Nor was this all: he was reproached by the general voice of the city as the original cause of a calamity which he had since shown himself impotent to redress. He it was, and his cause, which had drawn upon the people, so fatally trepanned, the hostility of the mysterious Masque. But for his Highness, all the burgomasters, captains, city-officers, &c., would now be sleeping in their beds; whereas the best fate which could be surmised for the most of them was that they were sleeping in dungeons; some perhaps in their graves. And thus the Landgrave's cause not merely lost its most efficient partisans, but through their loss determined the wavering against him, alienated the few who remained of his own faction, and gave strength and encouragement to the general disaffection which had so long prevailed.

Thus it happened that the conspirators, or suspected conspirators, could not be brought to trial, or to punishment without a trial. Any spark of fresh irritation falling upon the present combustible temper of the populace would not

fail to produce an explosion. Fresh conspirators, and real ones, were thus encouraged to arise. The university, the city, teemed with plots. The government of the Prince was exhausted with the growing labour of tracing and counteracting them. And, by little and little, matters came into such a condition that the control of the city, though still continuing in the Landgrave's hands, was maintained by mere martial force, and at the very point of the sword. And in no long time it was feared that with so general a principle of hatred to combine the populace, and so large a body of military students to head them, the balance of power, already approaching to an equipoise, would be turned against the Landgrave's government. And, in the best event, his Highness could now look for nothing from their love. All might be reckoned for lost that could not be extorted by force.

This state of things had been brought about by the dreadful Masque, seconded, no doubt, by those whom he had emboldened and aroused within; and, as the climax and crowning injury of the whole, every day unfolded more and more the vast importance which Klosterheim would soon possess as the centre and key of the movements to be anticipated in the coming campaign. An electoral cap would perhaps reward the services of the Landgrave in the general pacification, if he could present himself at the German Diet as the possessor *de facto* of Klosterheim and her territorial dependencies, and with some imperfect possession *de jure*; still more, if he could plead the merit of having brought over this state, so important from local situation, as a willing ally to the Swedish interest. But to this a free vote of the city was an essential preliminary; and from that, through the machinations of The Masque, he was now further than ever.

The temper of the Prince began to give way under these accumulated provocations. An enemy for ever aiming his blows with the deadliest effect; for ever stabbing in the dark; yet charmed and consecrated from all retaliation; always met with, never to be found! The Landgrave ground his teeth, clenched his fists, with spasms of fury. He quarrelled with his ministers; swore at the officers; cursed the sentinels; and the story went through Klosterheim that he had kicked Adorni.

Certain it was, under whatever stimulus, that Adorni put forth much more zeal at last for the apprehension of The Masque. Come what would, he publicly avowed that six days more should not elapse without the arrest of this "ruler of Klosterheim by night." He had a scheme for the purpose, a plot baited for snaring him; and he pledged his reputation as a minister and an intriguer upon its entire success.

On the following day, invitations were issued by Adorni, in his Highness's name, to a masqued ball on that day week. The fashion of masqued entertainments had been recently introduced from Italy into this sequestered nook of Germany; and here, as there, it had been abused to purposes of criminal intrigue.

Spite of the extreme unpopularity of the Landgrave with the low and middle classes of the city, among the highest his little court still continued to furnish a central resort to the rank and high blood, converged in such unusual proportion within the walls of Klosterheim. The *schloss* was still looked to as the standard and final court of appeal in all matters of taste, elegance, and high breeding. Hence it naturally happened that everybody, with any claims to such an honour, was anxious to receive a ticket of admission;—it became the test for ascertaining a person's pretensions to mix in the first circles of society; and, with this extraordinary zeal for obtaining an admission, naturally increased the minister's rigour and fastidiousness in pressing the usual investigation of the claimant's qualifications. Much offence was given on both sides, and many sneers hazarded at the minister himself, whose pretensions were supposed to be of the lowest description. But the result was that exactly twelve hundred cards were issued; these were regularly numbered, and below the device engraved upon the card was impressed a seal bearing the arms and motto of the Landgraves of X——.

Every precaution was taken for carrying into effect the scheme, with all its details, as concerted by Adorni; and the third day of the following week was announced as the day of the expected *fête*.

Chapter XIII

The morning of the important day at length arrived, and all Klosterheim was filled with expectation. Even those who were not amongst the invited shared in the anxiety; for a great scene was looked for, and perhaps some tragical explosion. The undertaking of Adorni was known; it had been published abroad that he was solemnly pledged to effect the arrest of The Masque; and by many it was believed that he would so far succeed, at the least, as to bring on a public collision with that extraordinary personage. As to the issue, most people were doubtful, The Masque having hitherto so uniformly defeated the best-laid schemes for his apprehension. But it was hardly questioned that the public challenge offered to him by Adorni would succeed in bringing him before the public eye. This challenge had taken the shape of a public notice, posted up in the places where The Masque had usually affixed his own; and it was to the following effect:—"That the noble strangers now in Klosterheim, and others invited to the Landgrave's *fête*, who might otherwise feel anxiety in presenting themselves at the *schloss*, from an apprehension of meeting with the criminal disturber of the public peace, known by the appellation of The Masque, were requested by authority to lay aside all apprehensions of that nature, as the most energetic measures had been adopted to prevent or chastise upon the spot any such insufferable intrusion; and, for The Masque himself, if he presumed to disturb the company by his presence, he would be seized where he stood, and without further inquiry committed to the Provost-Marshal for instant execution;—on which account, all persons were warned carefully to forbear from intrusions of simple curiosity, since in the hurry of the moment it might be difficult to make the requisite distinctions."

It was anticipated that this insulting notice would not long go without an answer from The Masque. Accordingly, on the following morning, a placard, equally conspicuous, was posted up in the same public places, side by side with that to which it replied. It was couched in the following

terms:—"That he who ruled by night in Klosterheim could not suppose himself to be excluded from a nocturnal *fête* given by any person in that city. That he must be allowed to believe himself invited by the Prince, and would certainly have the honour to accept his Highness's obliging summons. With regard to the low personalities addressed to himself, that he could not descend to notice anything of that nature coming from a man so abject as Adorni, until he should first have cleared himself from the imputation of having been a tailor in Venice at the time of the Spanish conspiracy in 1618, and banished from that city, not for any suspicions that could have settled upon him and his eight journeymen as making up one conspirator, but on account of some professional tricks in making a doublet for the Doge. For the rest, he repeated that he would not fail to meet the Landgrave and his honourable company."

All Klosterheim laughed at this public mortification offered to Adorni's pride; for that minister had incurred the public dislike as a foreigner, and their hatred on the score of private character. Adorni himself foamed at the mouth with rage, impotent for the present, but which he prepared to give deadly effect to at the proper time. But, whilst it laughed, Klosterheim also trembled. Some persons indeed were of opinion that the answer of The Masque was a mere sportive effusion of malice or pleasantry from the students, who had suffered so much by his annoyances. But the majority, amongst whom was Adorni himself, thought otherwise. Apart even from the reply, or the insult which had provoked it, the general impression was that The Masque would not have failed in attending a festival which, by the very costume which it imposed, offered so favourable a cloak to his own mysterious purposes. In this persuasion, Adorni took all the precautions which personal vengeance and Venetian subtlety could suggest, for availing himself of the single opportunity that would perhaps ever be allowed him for entrapping this public enemy, who had now become a private one to himself.

These various incidents had furnished abundant matter for conversation in Klosterheim, and had carried the public expectation to the highest pitch of anxiety, some time before

the great evening arrived. Leisure had been allowed for fear, and every possible anticipation of the wildest character, to unfold themselves. Hope, even, amongst many, was a predominant sensation. Ladies were preparing for hysterics. Cavaliers, besides the swords which they wore as regular articles of dress, were providing themselves with stilettoes against any sudden rencontre hand to hand, or any unexpected surprise. Armourers and furbishers of weapons were as much in request as the more appropriate artists who minister to such festal occasions. These again were summoned to give their professional aid and attendance to an extent so much out of proportion to their numbers and their natural power of exertion that they were harassed beyond all physical capacity of endurance, and found their ingenuity more heavily taxed to find personal substitutes amongst the trades most closely connected with their own than in any of the contrivances which more properly fell within the business of their own art. Tailors, horse-milliners, shoemakers, friseurs, drapers, mercers, tradesmen of every description, and servants of every class and denomination, were summoned to a sleepless activity—each in his several vocation, or in some which he undertook by proxy. Artificers who had escaped on political motives from Nuremburg and other Imperial cities, or from the sack of Magdeburg, now showed their ingenuity, and their readiness to earn the bread of industry; and, if Klosterheim resembled a hive in the close-packed condition of its inhabitants, it was now seen that the resemblance held good hardly less in the industry which, upon a sufficient excitement, it was able to develop. But in the midst of all this stir, din, and unprecedented activity, whatever occupation each man found for his thoughts or for his hands in his separate employments, all hearts were mastered by one domineering interest—the approaching collision of the Landgrave, before his assembled court, with the mysterious agent who had so long troubled his repose.

Chapter XIV

The day at length arrived; the guards were posted in unusual strength; the pages of honour, and servants in their

state-dresses, were drawn up in long and gorgeous files along the sides of the vast gothic halls, which ran in continued succession from the front of the *schloss* to the more modern saloons in the rear ; bands of military music, collected from amongst the foreign prisoners of various nations at Vienna, were stationed in their national costume—Italian, Hungarian, Turkish, or Croatian—in the lofty galleries or corridors which ran round the halls ; and the deep thunders of the kettle-drums, relieved by cymbals and wind-instruments, began to fill the mazes of the palace as early as seven o'clock in the evening ; for at that hour, according to the custom then established in Germany, such entertainments commenced. Repeated volleys from long lines of musketeers, drawn up in the square, and at the other entrances of the palace, with the deep roar of artillery, announced the arrival of the more distinguished visitors ; amongst whom it was rumoured that several officers in supreme command from the Swedish camp, already collected in the neighbourhood, were this night coming *incognito*—availing themselves of their masques to visit the Landgrave, and improve the terms of their alliance, whilst they declined the risk which they might have brought on themselves by too open a visit in their own avowed characters and persons to a town so unsettled in its state of feeling, and so friendly to the Emperor, as Klosterheim had notoriously become.

From seven to nine o'clock, in one unbroken line of succession, gorgeous parties streamed along through the halls, a distance of full half a quarter of a mile, until they were checked by the barriers erected at the entrance to the first of the entertaining rooms, as the station for examining the tickets of admission. This duty was fulfilled in a way which, though really rigorous in the extreme, gave no inhospitable annoyance to the visitors : the barriers themselves concealed their jealous purpose of hostility, and in a manner disavowed the secret awe and mysterious terror which brooded over the evening, by the beauty of their external appearance. They presented a triple line of gilt lattice-work, rising to a great altitude, and connected with the fretted roof by pendent draperies of the most magnificent velvet, intermingled with banners and heraldic trophies suspended from the ceiling, and

at intervals slowly agitated in the currents which now and then swept these aerial heights. In the centre of the lattice opened a single gate, on each side of which were stationed a couple of sentinels armed to the teeth; and this arrangement was repeated three times, so rigorous was the vigilance employed. At the second of the gates, where the bearer of a forged ticket would have found himself in a sort of trap, with absolutely no possibility of escape, every individual of each successive party presented his card of admission, and, fortunately for the convenience of the company, in consequence of the particular precaution used, one moment's inspection sufficed. The cards had been issued to the parties invited not very long before the time of assembling; consequently, as each was sealed with a private seal of the Landgrave's, sculptured elaborately with his armorial bearings, forgery would have been next to impossible.

These arrangements, however, were made rather to relieve the company from the too powerful terrors which haunted them, and to possess them from the first with a sense of security, than for the satisfaction of the Landgrave or his minister. They were sensible that The Masque had it in his power to command an access from the interior—and this it seemed next to impossible altogether to prevent; nor was *that* indeed the wish of Adorni, but rather to facilitate his admission, and afterwards, when satisfied of his actual presence, to bar up all possibility of retreat. Accordingly, the interior arrangements, though perfectly prepared, and ready to close up at the word of command, were for the present but negligently enforced.

Thus stood matters at nine o'clock, by which time upwards of a thousand persons had assembled; and in ten minutes more an officer reported that the whole twelve hundred were present without one defaulter.

The Landgrave had not yet appeared, his minister having received the company; nor was he expected to appear for an hour—in reality, he was occupied in political discussion with some of the illustrious *incognitos*. But this did not interfere with the progress of the festival; and at this moment nothing could be more impressive than the far-stretching splendours of the spectacle.

In one immense saloon, twelve hundred cavaliers and ladies, attired in the unrivalled pomp of that age, were arranging themselves for one of the magnificent Hungarian dances which the Emperor's court at Vienna had transplanted to the camp of Wallenstein, and thence to all the great houses of Germany. Bevies of noble women, in every variety of fanciful costume, but in each considerable group presenting deep masses of black or purple velvet, on which, with the most striking advantage of radiant relief, lay the costly pearl ornaments, or the sumptuous jewels, so generally significant in those times of high ancestral pretensions, intermingled with the drooping plumes of martial cavaliers, who presented almost universally the soldierly air of frankness which belongs to active service, mixed with the Castilian *grandezza* that still breathed through the camps of Germany, emanating originally from the magnificent courts of Brussels, of Madrid, and of Vienna, and propagated to this age by the links of Tilly, the Bavarian commander, and Wallenstein, the more than princely commander for the Emperor. Figures and habiliments so commanding were of themselves enough to fill the eye and occupy the imagination; but, beyond all this, feelings of awe and mystery, under more shapes than one, brooded over the whole scene, and diffused a tone of suspense and intense excitement throughout the vast assembly. It was known that illustrious strangers were present *incognito*. There now began to be some reason for anticipating a great battle in the neighbourhood. The men were now present perhaps, the very hands were now visibly displayed for the coming dance, which in a few days or even hours (so rapid were the movements at this period) were to wield the truncheon that might lay the Catholic empire prostrate, or might mould the destiny of Europe for centuries. Even this feeling gave way to one still more enveloped in shades—The Masque! Would he keep his promise and appear? might he not be there already? might he not even now be moving amongst them? may he not, even at this very moment, thought each person, secretly be near me—or even touching myself—or haunting my own steps?

Yet again, thought most people (for at that time hardly anybody affected to be incredulous in matters allied to the

supernatural), was this mysterious being liable to touch? Was he not of some impassive nature, inaudible, invisible, impalpable? Many of his escapes, if truly reported, seemed to argue as much. If, then, connected with the spiritual world, was it with the good or the evil in that inscrutable region? But then the bloodshed, the torn dresses, the marks of deadly struggle, which remained behind in some of those cases where mysterious disappearances had occurred,—these seemed undeniable arguments of murder, foul and treacherous murder. Every attempt, in short, to penetrate the mystery of this being's nature proved as abortive as the attempts to intercept his person; and all efforts at applying a solution to the difficulties of the case made the mystery even more mysterious.

These thoughts, however, generally as they pervaded the company, would have given way for a time at least to the excitement of the scene; for a sudden clapping of hands from some officers of the household, to enforce attention, and as a signal to the orchestra in one of the galleries, at this moment proclaimed that the dances were on the point of commencing in another half minute, when suddenly a shriek from a female, and then a loud tumultuous cry from a multitude of voices, announced some fearful catastrophe; and in the next moment a shout of "Murder!" froze the blood of the timid amongst the company.

Chapter XV

So vast was the saloon that it had been impossible through the maze of figures, the confusion of colours, and the mingling of a thousand voices, that anything should be perceived distinctly at the lower end of all that was now passing at the upper. Still, so awful is the mystery of life, and so hideous and accursed in man's imagination is every secret extinction of that consecrated lamp, that no news thrills so deeply, or travels so rapidly. Hardly could it be seen in what direction, or through whose communication, yet in less than a minute a movement of sympathizing horror, and uplifted hands, announced that the dreadful news had reached them. A murder, it was said, had been

committed in the palace. Ladies began to faint; others hastened away in search of friends; others to learn the news more accurately; and some of the gentlemen, who thought themselves sufficiently privileged by rank, hurried off with a stream of agitated inquirers to the interior of the castle, in search of the scene itself. A few only passed the guard in the first moments of confusion, and penetrated with the agitated Adorni through the long and winding passages, into the very scene of the murder. A rumour had prevailed for a moment that the Landgrave was himself the victim; and, as the road by which the agitated household conducted them took a direction towards his Highness's suite of rooms, at first Adorni had feared that result. Recovering his self-possession, however, at length, he learned that it was the poor old seneschal upon whom the blow had fallen. And he pressed on with more coolness to the dreadful spectacle.

The poor old man was stretched at his length on the floor. It did not seem that he had struggled with the murderer. Indeed, from some appearances, it seemed probable that he had been attacked whilst sleeping; and, though he had received three wounds, it was pronounced by a surgeon that one of them (and *that*, from circumstances, the first) had been sufficient to extinguish life. He was discovered by his daughter, a woman who held some respectable place amongst the servants of the castle; and every presumption concurred in fixing the time of the dreadful scene to about one hour before.

"Such, gentlemen, are the acts of this atrocious monster, this Masque, who has so long been the scourge of Klosterheim," said Adorni to the strangers who had accompanied him, as they turned away on their return to the company; "but this very night, I trust, will put a bridle in his mouth."

"God grant it may be so!" said some. But others thought the whole case too mysterious for conjectures, and too solemn to be decided by presumptions. And in the midst of agitated discussions on the scene they had just witnessed, as well as the whole history of The Masque, the party returned to the saloon.

Under ordinary circumstances, this dreadful event would

have damped the spirits of the company; as it was, it did but deepen the gloomy excitement which already had possession of all present, and raise a more intense expectation of the visit so publicly announced by The Masque. It seemed as though he had perpetrated this recent murder merely by way of reviving the impression of his own dreadful character in Klosterheim, which might have decayed a little of late, in all its original strength and freshness of novelty; or, as though he wished to send immediately before him an act of atrocity that should form an appropriate herald or harbinger of his own entrance upon the scene.

Dreadful, however, as this deed of darkness was, it seemed of too domestic a nature to exercise any continued influence upon so distinguished an assembly, so numerous, so splendid, and brought together at so distinguished a summons. Again, therefore, the masques prepared to mingle in the dance; again the signal was given; again the obedient orchestra preluded to the coming strains. In a moment more, the full tide of harmony swept along. The vast saloon, and its echoing roof, rang with the storm of music. The masques, with their floating plumes and jewelled caps, glided through the fine mazes of the Hungarian dances. All was one magnificent and tempestuous confusion, overflowing with the luxury of sound and sight, when suddenly, about midnight, a trumpet sounded, the Landgrave entered, and all was hushed. The glittering crowd arranged themselves in a half circle at the upper end of the room; his Highness went rapidly round, saluting the company, and receiving their homage in return. A signal was again made; the music and the dancing were resumed; and such was the animation and the turbulent delight amongst the gayer part of the company, from the commingling of youthful blood with wine, lights, music, and festal conversation, that, with many, all thoughts of the dreadful Masque, who "reigned by night in Klosterheim," had faded before the exhilaration of the moment. Midnight had come; the dreadful apparition had not yet entered: young ladies began timidly to jest upon the subject, though as yet but faintly, and in a tone somewhat serious for a jest; and young cavaliers, who, to do them justice, had derived most part of their terrors from the

superstitious view of the case, protested to their partners that if The Masque, on making his appearance, should conduct himself in a manner unbecoming a cavalier, or offensive to the ladies present, they should feel it their duty to chastise him; "though," said they, "with respect to old Adorni, should The Masque think proper to teach him better manners, or even to cane him, we shall not find it necessary to interfere."

Several of the *very* young ladies protested that, of all things, they should like to see a battle between old Adorni and The Masque, "such a love of a quiz that old Adorni is!" whilst others debated whether The Masque would turn out a young man or an old one; and a few elderly maidens mooted the point whether he were likely to be a "single" gentleman, or burdened with a "wife and family." These and similar discussions were increasing in vivacity, and kindling more and more gaiety of repartee, when suddenly, with the effect of a funeral knell upon their mirth, a whisper began to circulate, that *there was one Masque too many in company.* Persons had been stationed by Adorni in different galleries, with instructions to note accurately the dress of every person in the company; to watch the motions of every one who gave the slightest cause for suspicion, by standing aloof from the rest of the assembly, or by any other peculiarity of manner; but, above all, to count the numbers of the total assembly. This last injunction was more easily obeyed than at first sight seemed possible. At this time, the Hungarian dances, which required a certain number of partners to execute the movements of the figure, were of themselves a sufficient register of the precise amount of persons engaged in them. And, as these dances continued for a long time undisturbed, this calculation, once made, left no further computation necessary than simply to take the account of all who stood otherwise engaged. This list, being much the smaller one, was soon made; and the reports of several different observers, stationed in different galleries, and checked by each other, all tallied in reporting a total of just *twelve hundred and one persons,* after every allowance was made for the known members of the Landgrave's suite, who were all unmasqued.

This report was announced, with considerable trepidation, in a very audible whisper to Adorni and the Landgrave. The buzz of agitation attracted instant attention ; the whisper was loud enough to catch the ears of several ; the news went rapidly kindling through the room that the company was too many by one : all the ladies trembled, their knees shook, their voices failed, they stopped in the very middle of questions, answers halted for their conclusion and were never more remembered by either party; the very music began to falter, the lights seemed to wane and sicken ; for the fact was now too evident—that The Masque had kept his appointment, and was at this moment in the room, "to meet the Landgrave and his honourable company."

Adorni and the Landgrave now walked apart from the rest of the household, and were obviously consulting together on the next step to be taken, or on the proper moment for executing one which had already been decided on. Some crisis seemed approaching, and the knees of many ladies knocked together, as they anticipated some cruel or bloody act of vengeance. "Oh, poor Masque !" sighed a young lady in her tender-hearted concern for one who seemed now at the mercy of his enemies ; "Do you think, sir," addressing her partner, "they will cut him to pieces ?"—"Oh, that wicked old Adorni !" exclaimed another ; "I know he will stick the poor Masque on one side, and somebody else will stick him on the other ; I know he will, because The Masque called him a tailor : do you think he *was* a tailor, sir ?"—"Why, really, madam, he walks like a tailor ; but then he must be a very bad one, considering how ill his own clothes are made ; and *that*, you know, is next door to being none at all. But see, his Highness is going to stop the music."

In fact, at that moment the Landgrave made a signal to the orchestra ; the music ceased abruptly ; and his Highness advancing to the company, who stood eagerly awaiting his words, said—"Illustrious and noble friends ! for a very urgent and special cause I will request of you all to take your seats."

The company obeyed : every one sought the chair next to him, or, if a lady, accepted that which was offered by the cavalier at her side. The standers continually diminished.

Two hundred were left, one hundred and fifty, eighty, sixty, twenty, till at last they were reduced to two,—both gentlemen, who had been attending upon ladies. They were suddenly aware of their own situation. One chair only remained out of twelve hundred. Eager to exonerate himself from suspicion, each sprang furiously to this seat; each attained it at the same moment, and each possessed himself of part at the same instant. As they happened to be two elderly corpulent men, the younger cavaliers, under all the restraints of the moment, the panic of the company, and the Landgrave's presence, could not forbear laughing; and the more spirited amongst the young ladies caught the infection.

His Highness was little in a temper to brook this levity; and hastened to relieve the joint occupants of the chair from the ridicule of their situation. "Enough!" he exclaimed, "enough! all my friends are requested to resume the situation most agreeable to them; my purpose is answered."—The Prince was himself standing with all his household, and, as a point of respect, all the company rose. ("*As you were,*" whispered the young soldiers to their fair companions.)

Adorni now came forward. "It is known," said he, "by trials more than sufficient, that some intruder, with the worst intentions, has crept into this honourable company. The ladies present will therefore have the goodness to retire apart to the lower end of the saloon, whilst the noble cavaliers will present themselves in succession to six officers of his Highness's household, to whom they will privately communicate their names and quality."

This arrangement was complied with, not however without the exchange of a few flying jests on the part of the younger cavaliers and their fair partners, as they separated for the purpose. The cavaliers, who were rather more than five hundred in number, went up as they were summoned by the number marked upon their cards of admission, and, privately communicating with some one of the officers appointed, were soon told off, and filed away to the right of the Landgrave, waiting for the signal which should give them permission to rejoin their parties.

All had been now told off, within a score. These were clustered together in a group; and in that group undoubtedly

was The Masque. Every eye was converged upon this small knot of cavaliers; each of the spectators, according to his fancy, selected the one who came nearest in dress, or in personal appearance, to his preconceptions of that mysterious agent. Not a word was uttered, not a whisper; hardly a robe was heard to rustle, or a feather to wave.

The twenty were rapidly reduced to twelve, these to six, the six to four—three—two; the tale of the invited was complete, and one man remained behind. That was, past doubting, The Masque!

Chapter XVI

"There stands he that governs Klosterheim by night!" thought every cavalier, as he endeavoured to pierce the gloomy being's concealment, with penetrating eyes, or by scrutiny ten times repeated, to unmasque the dismal secrets which lurked beneath his disguise. "There stands the gloomy murderer!" thought another. "There stands the poor detected criminal," thought the pitying young ladies, "who in the next moment must lay bare his breast to the Landgrave's musketeers."

The figure meantime stood tranquil and collected, apparently not in the least disturbed by the consciousness of his situation, or the breathless suspense of more than a thousand spectators of rank and eminent station, all bending their looks upon himself. He had been leaning against a marble column, as if wrapped up in reverie, and careless of everything about him. But, when the dead silence announced that the ceremony was closed, that he only remained to answer for himself, and upon palpable proof—evidence not to be gainsaid—incapable of answering satisfactorily; when in fact it was beyond dispute that here was at length revealed, in bodily presence, before the eyes of those whom he had so long haunted with terrors, The Masque of Klosterheim,—it was naturally expected that now at least he would show alarm and trepidation; that he would prepare for defence, or address himself to instant flight.

Far otherwise!—cooler than any one person beside in the saloon, he stood, like the marble column against which he

had been reclining, upright—massy—and imperturbable. He was enveloped in a voluminous mantle, which at this moment, with a leisurely motion, he suffered to fall at his feet, and displayed a figure in which the grace of an Antinous met with the columnar strength of a Grecian Hercules,—presenting, in its *tout ensemble*, the majestic proportions of a Jupiter. He stood—a breathing statue of gladiatorial beauty, towering above all who were near him, and eclipsing the noblest specimens of the human form which the martial assembly presented. A buzz of admiration arose, which in the following moment was suspended by the dubious recollections investing his past appearances, and the terror which waited even on his present movements. He was armed to the teeth; and he was obviously preparing to move.

Not a word had yet been spoken; so tumultuous was the succession of surprises, so mixed and conflicting the feelings, so intense the anxiety. The arrangement of the groups was this:—At the lower half of the room, but starting forward in attitudes of admiration or suspense, were the ladies of Klosterheim. At the upper end, in the centre, one hand raised to bespeak attention, was The Masque of Klosterheim. To his left, and a little behind him, with a subtle Venetian countenance, one hand waving back a half file of musketeers, and the other raised as if to arrest the arm of The Masque, was the wily minister Adorni—creeping nearer and nearer with a stealthy stride. To his right was the great body of Klosterheim cavaliers, a score of students and young officers pressing forward to the front; but in advance of the whole, the Landgrave of X——, haughty, lowering, and throwing out looks of defiance. These were the positions and attitudes in which the first discovery of The Masque had surprised them; and these they still retained. Less dignified spectators were looking downwards from the galleries.

"Surrender!" was the first word by which silence was broken; it came from the Landgrave.

"Or die!" exclaimed Adorni.

"He dies in any case," rejoined the Prince.

The Masque still raised his hand with the action of one who bespeaks attention. Adorni he deigned not to notice. Slightly inclining his head to the Landgrave, in a tone to

which it might be the head-dress of elaborate steel-work that gave a sepulchral tone, he replied,—

"The Masque, who rules in Klosterheim by night, surrenders not. He can die. But first he will complete the ceremony of the night, he will reveal himself."

"That is superfluous," exclaimed Adorni; "we need no further revelations.—Seize him, and lead him out to death!"

"Dog of an Italian!" replied The Masque, drawing a dag[1] from his belt, "die first yourself!" And so saying, he slowly turned and levelled the barrel at Adorni, who fled with two bounds to the soldiers in the rear. Then, withdrawing the weapon hastily, he added in a tone of cool contempt, "Or bridle that coward's tongue."

But this was not the minister's intention. "Seize him!" he cried again impetuously to the soldiers, laying his hand on the arm of the foremost, and pointing them forward to their prey.

"No!" said the Landgrave, with a commanding voice; "Halt! I bid you." Something there was in the tone, or it might be that there was something in his private recollections, or something in the general mystery, which promised a discovery that he feared to lose by the too precipitate vengeance of the Italian. "What is it, mysterious being, that you would reveal? Or who is it that you now believe interested in your revelations?"

"Yourself.—Prince, it would seem that you have me at your mercy: wherefore then the coward haste of this Venetian hound? I am one; you are many. Lead me then out; shoot me. But no: Freely I entered this hall; freely I will leave it. If I must die, I will die as a soldier. Such I am; and neither runagate from a foreign land; nor"—turning to Adorni—"a base mechanic."

"But a murderer!" shrieked Adorni: "but a murderer; and with hands yet reeking from innocent blood!"

"Blood, Adorni, that I will yet avenge.—Prince, you demand the nature of my revelations. I will reveal my name, my quality, and my mission."

"And to whom?"

[1] *Dag*, a sort of pistol or carbine.

"To yourself, and none beside. And, as a pledge for the sincerity of my discoveries, I will first of all communicate a dreadful secret, known, as you fondly believe, to none but your Highness. Prince, dare you receive my revelations?"

Speaking thus, The Masque took one step to the rear, turning his back upon the room, and by a gesture, signified his wish that the Landgrave should accompany him. But at this motion, ten or a dozen of the foremost among the young cavaliers started forward in advance of the Landgrave, in part forming a half circle about his person, and in part commanding the open doorway.

"He is armed!" they exclaimed; "and trebly armed: will your Highness approach him too nearly?"

"I fear him not," said the Landgrave, with something of a contemptuous tone.

"Wherefore should you fear me?" retorted The Masque, with a manner so tranquil and serene as involuntarily to disarm suspicion: "Were it possible that I should seek the life of any man here in particular, in that case (pointing to the firearms in his belt), why should I need to come nearer? Were it possible that any should find in my conduct here a motive to a personal vengeance upon myself, which of you is not near enough? Has your Highness the courage to trample on such terrors?"

Thus challenged as it were to a trial of his courage before the assembled rank of Klosterheim, the Landgrave waved off all who would have stepped forward officiously to his support. If he felt any tremors, he was now sensible that pride and princely honour called upon him to dissemble them. And, probably, that sort of tremors which he felt in reality did not point in a direction to which physical support, such as was now tendered, could have been available. He hesitated no longer, but strode forward to meet The Masque. His Highness and The Masque met near the archway of the door, in the very centre of the groups.

With a thrilling tone, deep—piercing—full of alarm, The Masque began thus:—

"To win your confidence, for ever to establish credit with your Highness, I will first of all reveal the name of that murderer who this night dared to pollute your palace with

an old man's blood. Prince, bend your ear a little this way."

With a shudder, and a visible effort of self-command, the Landgrave inclined his ear to The Masque, who added,—

"Your Highness will be shocked to hear it": then, in a lower tone, "Who could have believed it?—It was ——." All was pronounced clearly and strongly, except the last word—the name of the murderer: *that* was made audible only to the Landgrave's ear.

Sudden and tremendous was the effect upon the prince: he reeled a few paces off; put his hand to the hilt of his sword; smote his forehead; threw frenzied looks upon The Masque,—now half imploring, now dark with vindictive wrath. Then succeeded a pause of profoundest silence, during which all the twelve hundred visitors, whom he had himself assembled, as if expressly to make them witnesses of this extraordinary scene, and of the power with which a stranger could shake him to and fro in a tempestuous strife of passions, were looking and hearkening with senses on the stretch to pierce the veil of silence and of distance. At last the Landgrave mastered his emotions sufficiently to say, "Well, sir, what next?"

"Next comes a revelation of another kind; and I warn you, sir, that it will not be less trying to the nerves. For this first I needed your ear; now I shall need your eyes. Think again, Prince, whether you will stand the trial."

"Pshaw! sir, you trifle with me; again I tell you——" But here the Landgrave spoke with an affectation of composure and with an effort that did not escape notice;—"again I tell you that I fear you not. Go on."

"Then come forward a little, please your Highness, to the light of this lamp." So saying, with a step or two in advance, he drew the Prince under the powerful glare of a lamp suspended near the great archway of entrance from the interior of the palace. Both were now standing with their faces entirely averted from the spectators. Still more effectually, however, to screen himself from any of those groups on the left whose advanced position gave them somewhat more the advantage of an oblique aspect, The Masque, at this moment, suddenly drew up, with his left hand, a short

Spanish mantle which depended from his shoulders, and now gave him the benefit of a lateral screen. Then, so far as the company behind them could guess at his act, unlocking with his right hand and raising the masque which shrouded his mysterious features, he shouted aloud in a voice that rang clear through every corner of the vast saloon, "Landgrave, for crimes yet unrevealed, I summon you, in twenty days, before a tribunal where there is no shield but innocence!" and at that moment turned his countenance full upon the Prince.

With a yell, rather than a human expression of terror, the Landgrave fell, as if shot by a thunderbolt, stretched at his full length upon the ground, lifeless apparently, and bereft of consciousness or sensation. A sympathetic cry of horror arose from the spectators. All rushed towards The Masque. The young cavaliers who had first stepped forward as volunteers in the Landgrave's defence were foremost, and interposed between The Masque and the outstretched arms of Adorni, as if eager to seize him first. In an instant a sudden and dense cloud of smoke arose, nobody knew whence. Repeated discharges of firearms were heard resounding from the doorway and the passages; these increased the smoke and the confusion. Trumpets sounded through the corridors. The whole archway under which The Masque and the Landgrave had been standing became choked up with soldiery, summoned by the furious alarms that echoed through the palace. All was one uproar and chaos of masques, plumes, helmets, halberds, trumpets, gleaming sabres, and the fierce faces of soldiery forcing themselves through the floating drapery of smoke that now filled the whole upper end of the saloon. Adorni was seen in the midst, raving fruitlessly. Nobody heard: nobody listened. Universal panic had seized the household, the soldiery, and the company. Nobody understood exactly for what purpose the tumult had commenced—in what direction it tended. Some tragic catastrophe was reported from mouth to mouth: nobody knew what. Some said—the Landgrave had been assassinated; some—The Masque; some asserted that both had perished under reciprocal assaults. More believed that The Masque had proved to be

of that supernatural order of beings with which the prevailing opinions of Klosterheim had long classed him ; and that, upon raising his disguise, he had revealed to the Landgrave the fleshless skull of some forgotten tenant of the grave. This indeed seemed to many the only solution that, whilst it fell in with the prejudices and superstitions of the age, was of a nature to account for that tremendous effect which the discovery had produced upon the Landgrave. But it was one that naturally could be little calculated to calm the agitations of the public prevailing at this moment. This spread contagiously. The succession of alarming events,—the murder, the appearance of The Masque, his subsequent extraordinary behaviour, the overwhelming impression upon the Landgrave, which had formed the catastrophe of this scenical exhibition,—the consternation of the great Swedish officers, who were spending the night in Klosterheim, and reasonably suspected that the tumult might be owing to the sudden detection of their own *incognito*, and that, in consequence, the populace of this Imperial city were suddenly rising to arms ; the endless distraction and counteraction of so many thousand persons—visitors, servants, soldiery, household—all hurrying to the same point, and bringing assistance to a danger of which nobody knew the origin, nobody the nature, nobody the issue ; multitudes commanding where all obedience was forgotten, all subordination had gone to wreck ;—these circumstances of distraction united to sustain a scene of absolute frenzy in the castle, which, for more than half an hour, the dense columns of smoke aggravated alarmingly, by raising, in many quarters, additional terrors of fire. And, when at last, after infinite exertions, the soldiery had deployed into the ball-room and the adjacent apartments of state, and had succeeded, at the point of the pike, in establishing a safe egress for the twelve hundred visitors, it was then first ascertained that all traces of The Masque had been lost in the smoke and subsequent confusion, and that, with his usual good fortune, he had succeeded in baffling his pursuers.

Chapter XVII

Meantime the Lady Paulina had spent her time in secret grief, inconsolable for the supposed tragical fate of Maximilian. It was believed that he had perished. This opinion had prevailed equally amongst his friends and the few enemies whom circumstances had made him. Supposing even that he had escaped with life from the action, it seemed inevitable that he should have fallen into the hands of the bloody Holkerstein; and under circumstances which would point him out to the vengeance of that cruel ruffian—as having been the leader in the powerful resistance which had robbed him of his prey.

Stung with the sense of her irreparable loss, and the premature grief which had blighted her early hopes, Paulina sought her refuge in solitude, and her consolations in religion. In the convent, where she had found a home, the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic service were maintained with the strictness and the pomp suitable to its ample endowments. The Emperor had himself, as well as several of his progenitors, been a liberal benefactor to this establishment. And a lady of his house, therefore, recommended by a special introduction from the Emperor to the attentions of the Lady Abbess, was sure of meeting kindness and courtesy in every possible shape which could avail to mitigate her sorrow. The Abbess, though a bigot, was a human being, with strong human sensibilities; and in both characters she was greatly pleased with the Lady Paulina. On the one hand, her pride, as the head of a religious establishment, was flattered by the extreme regularity of the Lady Paulina in conforming to the ritual of her house; this example of spiritual obedience and duty seemed peculiarly edifying in a person of such distinguished rank. On the other hand, her womanly sensibilities were touched by the spectacle of early and unmerited sorrow in one so eminent for her personal merits—for her extreme beauty, and the winning sweetness of her manners. Hence she readily offered to the young Countess all the attentions and marks of sympathy which her retiring habits permitted, and every species of indulgence compatible with the spirit of the institution.

The whole convent, nuns as well as strangers, taking their tone from the Abbess, vied with each other in attentions to Paulina. But, whilst acknowledging their kindness, she continued to shrink from all general intercourse with the society about her. Her attendance was constant at the matins and at vespers; not unfrequently even at the midnight service; but dejection was too rooted in her heart to allow her any disposition to enter into the amusements or mixed society which the convent at that time offered.

Many noble strangers had been allowed to take up their quarters in the convent. With some of these the Abbess was connected by blood, with others by ties of ancient friendship. Most of this party composed a little society apart from the rest, and continued to pursue those amusements or occupations which properly belonged to their stations and quality, but, by their too worldly nature, were calculated to exclude the religious members of the institution from partaking in them. To this society Paulina received frequent invitations, which, however, she declined so uniformly that at length all efforts ceased to draw her from the retirement which she so manifestly adhered to from choice. The motives of her dejection became known throughout the convent, and were respected; and it was now reported amongst them, from her aversion to society as well as her increasing devotion, that the Lady Paulina would soon take the veil.

Amongst the strangers was one, a lady of mature age, with beauty still powerful enough to fascinate all beholders, who seemed to survey Paulina with an interest far beyond that of curiosity or simple admiration. Sorrow might be supposed the common bond which connected them; for there were rumours amongst the sisterhood of St. Agnes that this lady had suffered afflictions heavier than fell to an ordinary lot in the course of the war which now desolated Germany. Her husband (it was said), of whom no more was known than that he was some officer of high rank, had perished by the hand of violence; a young daughter, the only child of two or three who remained to her, had been carried off in infancy; and no traces remained of her subsequent fate. To these misfortunes was added the loss of her

estates and rank, which, in some mysterious way, were supposed to be withheld from her by one of those great oppressors whom war and the policy of great allies had aggrandized. It was supposed even that for the means of subsistence to herself, and a few faithful attendants, she was indebted to the kindness of the Lady Abbess, with whom she was closely connected by ancient friendship.

In this tale there were many inaccuracies mixed up with the truth. It was true that, in some one of the many dire convulsions which had passed from land to land since the first outbreak of the Bohemian troubles in 1618, and which had covered with a veil of political pretexts so many local acts of private family feud and murderous treason, this lady had been deprived of her husband by a violent death under circumstances which still seemed mysterious. But the fate of her children, if any had survived the calamity which took off her husband, was unknown to everybody except her confidential protectress the Lady Abbess. By permission of this powerful friend, who had known her from infancy and through the whole course of her misfortunes, she was permitted to take up her abode in the convent, under special privileges, and was there known by the name of Sister Madeline.

The intercourse of the Sister Madeline with the Lady Abbess was free and unreserved. At all hours they entered each other's rooms with the familiarity of sisters; and it might have been thought that in every respect they stood upon the equal footing of near relatives, except that occasionally in the manners of the Abbess was traced or imagined a secret air of deference towards the desolate Sister Madeline, which, as it was not countenanced at all by their present relations to each other, left people at liberty to build upon it a large superstructure of romantic conjectures.

Sister Madeline was as regular in her attendance upon prayers as Paulina. There, if nowhere else, they were sure of meeting; and in no long time it became evident that the younger lady was an object of particular interest to the elder. When the sublime fugues of the old composers for the organ swelled upon the air, and filled the vast aisles of the chapel with their floating labyrinths of sound, attention to

the offices of the church service being suspended for the time, the Sister Madeline spent the interval in watching the countenance of Paulina. Invariably at this period her eyes settled upon the young Countess, and appeared to court some return of attention, by the tender sympathy which her own features expressed with the grief too legibly inscribed upon Paulina's. For some time Paulina, absorbed by her own thoughts, failed to notice this very particular expression of attention and interest. Accustomed to the gaze of crowds, as well on account of her beauty as her connexion with the Imperial house, she found nothing new or distressing in this attention to herself. After some time, however, observing herself still haunted by the sister's furtive glances, she found her own curiosity somewhat awakened in return. The manners of Sister Madeline were too dignified, and her face expressed too much of profound feeling, and traces too inextinguishable of the trials through which she had passed, to allow room for any belief that she was under the influence of an ordinary curiosity. Paulina was struck with a confused feeling,—that she looked upon features which had already been familiar to her heart, though disguised in Sister Madeline by age, by sex, and by the ravages of grief; she had the appearance of having passed her fiftieth year; but it was probable that, spite of a brilliant complexion, secret sorrow had worked a natural effect in giving to her the appearance of age more advanced by seven or eight years than she had really attained. Time, at all events, if it had carried off for ever her youthful graces, neither had nor seemed likely to destroy the impression of majestic beauty under eclipse and wane. No one could fail to read the signs by which the finger of nature announces a great destiny, and a mind born to command.

Insensibly the two ladies had established a sort of intercourse by looks; and at length, upon finding that the sister Madeline mixed no more than herself in the general society of Klosterheim, Paulina had resolved to seek the acquaintance of a lady whose deportment announced that she would prove an interesting acquaintance, whilst her melancholy story and the expression of her looks were a sort of pledges that she would be found a sympathizing friend.

She had already taken some steps towards the attainment of her wishes, when unexpectedly, on coming out from the vesper service, the Sister Madeline placed herself by the side of Paulina, and they walked down one of the long side aisles together. The saintly memorials about them, the records of everlasting peace which lay sculptured at their feet, and the strains which still ascended to heaven from the organ and the white-robed choir,—all speaking of a rest from trouble so little to be found on earth, and so powerfully contrasting with the desolations of poor harassed Germany,—affected them deeply, and both burst into tears. At length the elder lady spoke.

"Daughter, you keep your faith piously with him whom you suppose dead."

Paulina started. The other continued—

"Honour to young hearts that are knit together by ties so firm that even death has no power to dissolve them! Honour to the love which can breed so deep a sorrow! Yet, even in this world, the good are not *always* the unhappy. I doubt not that, even now at vespers, you forgot not to pray for him that would willingly have died for you."

"Oh, gracious lady! when—when have I forgot that? What other prayer — what other image — is ever at my heart?"

"Daughter, I could not doubt it; and Heaven sometimes sends answers to prayers when they are least expected; and to yours it sends this through me."

With these words she stretched out a letter to Paulina, who fainted with sudden surprise and delight on recognising the hand of Maximilian.

Chapter XVIII

It was indeed the handwriting of her lover; and the first words of the letter, which bore a recent date, announced his safety and his recovered health. A rapid sketch of all which had befallen him since they had last parted informed her that he had been severely wounded in the action with Holkerstein's people, and probably to that misfortune had been indebted for his life; since the difficulty of transport-

ing him on horseback, when unable to sit upright, had compelled the party charged with his care to leave him for the night at Waldenhausen. From that place he had been carried off in the night-time to a small Imperial garrison in the neighbourhood by the care of two faithful servants, who had found little difficulty in first intoxicating, and then overpowering, the small guard judged sufficient for a prisoner so completely disabled by his wounds. In this garrison he had recovered; had corresponded with Vienna; had concerted measures with the Emperor; and was now on the point of giving full effect to their plans, at the moment when certain circumstances should arise to favour the scheme. What these were, he forbore designedly to say in a letter which ran some risk of falling into the enemy's hands; but he bade Paulina speedily to expect a great change for the better, which would put it in their power to meet without restraint or fear,—and concluded by giving utterance in the fondest terms to a lover's hopes and tenderest anxieties.

Paulina had scarcely recovered from the tumultuous sensations of pleasure, and sudden restoration to hope, when she received a shock in the opposite direction, from a summons to attend the Landgrave. The language of the message was imperative, and more peremptory than had ever before been addressed to herself, a lady of the Imperial family. She knew the Landgrave's character and his present position; both these alarmed her, when connected with the style and language of his summons. For *that* announced distinctly enough that his resolution had been now taken to commit himself to a bold course,—no longer to hang doubtfully between two policies, but openly to throw himself into the arms of the Emperor's enemies. In one view, Paulina found a benefit to her spirits from this haughtiness of the Landgrave's message. She was neither proud, nor apt to take offence. On the contrary, she was gentle and meek; for the impulses of youth and elevated birth had in her been chastened by her early acquaintance with great national calamities, and the enlarged sympathy which that had bred with her fellow-creatures of every rank. But she felt that, in this superfluous expression of authority, the Landgrave was at the same time infringing the rights of hospitality and

her own privileges of sex. Indignation at his unmanly conduct gave her spirits to face him, though she apprehended a scene of violence, and had the more reason to feel the trepidations of uncertainty because she very imperfectly comprehended his purposes as respected herself.

These were not easily explained. She found the Landgrave pacing the room with violence. His back was turned towards her as she entered ; but, as the usher announced loudly on her entrance, "The Countess Paulina of Hohenhelder," he turned impetuously, and advanced to meet her. With the Landgrave, however irritated, the first impulse was to comply with the ceremonious observances that belonged to his rank. He made a cold obeisance, whilst an attendant placed a seat, and then, motioning to all present to withdraw, began to unfold the causes which had called for Lady Paulina's presence.

So much art was mingled with so much violence that for some time Paulina gathered nothing of his real purposes. Resolved, however, to do justice to her own insulted dignity, she took the first opening which offered to remonstrate with the Landgrave on the needless violence of his summons. His Serene Highness wielded the sword in Klosterheim, and could have no reason for anticipating resistance to his commands.

"The Lady Paulina then distinguishes between the power and the right? I expected as much."

"By no means ; she knew nothing of the claimants to either. She was a stranger, seeking only hospitality in Klosterheim, which apparently was violated by unprovoked exertions of authority."

"But the laws of hospitality," replied the Landgrave, "press equally on the guest and the host. Each has his separate duties. And the Lady Paulina, in the character of guest, violated hers from the moment when she formed cabals in Klosterheim, and ministered to the fury of conspirators."

"Your ear, sir, is abused ; I have not so much as stepped beyond the precincts of the convent in which I reside, until this day in paying obedience to your Highness's mandate."

"That may be ; and that may argue only the more

caution and subtlety. The personal presence of a lady so distinguished in her appearance as the Lady Paulina at any resort of conspirators or intriguers would have published too much the suspicions to which such a countenance would be liable. But, in writing, have you dispersed nothing calculated to alienate the attachment of my subjects?"

The Lady Paulina shook her head; she knew not even in what direction the Landgrave's suspicions pointed.

"As, for example, this—does the Lady Paulina recognise this particular paper?"

Saying this, he drew forth from a portfolio a letter or paper of instructions, consisting of several sheets, to which a large official seal was attached. The Countess glanced her eye over it attentively; in one or two places the words *Maximilian* and *Klosterheim* attracted her attention; but she felt satisfied at once that she now saw it for the first time.

"Of this paper," she said at length, in a determined tone, "I know nothing. The handwriting I believe I may have seen before. It resembles that of one of the Emperor's secretaries. Beyond that, I have no means of even conjecturing its origin."

"Beware, madam, beware how far you commit yourself. Suppose now this paper were actually brought in one of your ladyship's mails, amongst your own private property."

"That may very well be," said Lady Paulina, "and yet imply no falsehood on my part. Falsehood! I disdain such an insinuation; your Highness has been the first person who ever dared to make it." At that moment she called to mind the robbery of her carriage at Waldenhausen. Colouring deeply with indignation, she added, "Even in the case, sir, which you have supposed, as unconscious bearer of this or any other paper, I am still innocent of the intentions which such an act might argue in some people. I am as incapable of offending in that way, as I shall always be of disavowing any of my own acts, according to your ungenerous insinuation. But now, sir, tell me how far those may be innocent who have possessed themselves of a paper carried, as your Highness alleges, among my private baggage? Was it for a

Prince to countenance a robbery of that nature, or to appropriate its spoils?"

The blood rushed to the Landgrave's temples. "In these times, young lady, petty rights of individuals give way to state necessities. Neither are there any such rights of individuals in bar of such an inquisition. They are forfeited, as I told you before, when the guest forgets his duties. But" (and here he frowned) "it seems to me, Countess, that you are now forgetting your situation; not I, remember, but yourself, are now placed on trial."

"Indeed!" said the Countess; "of that I was certainly not aware. Who, then, is my accuser, who my judge? Or is it in your Serene Highness that I see both?"

"Your accuser, Lady Paulina, is the paper I have shown you, a treasonable paper. Perhaps I have others to bring forward of the same bearing. Perhaps this is sufficient."

The Lady Paulina grew suddenly sad and thoughtful. Here was a tyrant, with matter against her which, even to an unprejudiced judge, might really wear some face of plausibility. The paper had perhaps really been one of those plundered from her carriage. It might really contain matter fitted to excite disaffection against the Landgrave's government. Her own innocence of all participation in the designs which it purposed to abet might find no credit; or might avail her not at all in a situation so far removed from the Imperial protection. She had in fact unadvisedly entered a city which, at the time of her entrance, might be looked upon as neutral, but since then had been forced into the ranks of the Emperor's enemies, too abruptly to allow of warning or retreat. This was her exact situation. She saw her danger; and again apprehended that, at the very moment of recovering her lover from the midst of perils besetting *his* situation, she might lose him by the perils of her own.

The Landgrave watched the changes of her countenance, and read her thoughts.

"Yes," he said, at length, "your situation is one of peril. But take courage. Confess freely, and you have everything to hope for from my clemency."

"Such clemency," said a deep voice, from some remote quarter of the room, "as the wolf shows to the lamb."

Paulina started, and the Landgrave looked angry and perplexed. "Within there!" he cried loudly to the attendants in the next room. "I will no more endure these insults," he exclaimed. "Go instantly, take a file of soldiers; place them at all the outlets, and search the rooms adjoining —above, and below. Such mummery is insufferable."

The voice replied again, "Landgrave, you search in vain. Look to yourself! young Max is upon you!"

"This babbler," said the Landgrave, making an effort to recover his coolness, "reminds me well; that adventurer, young Maximilian—who is he, whence comes he? by whom authorized?"

Paulina blushed; but, roused by the Landgrave's contumelious expressions applied to her lover, she replied—"He is no adventurer; nor was ever in that class; the Emperor's favour is not bestowed upon such."

"Then, what brings him to Klosterheim? For what is it that he would trouble the repose of this city?"

Before Paulina could speak in rejoinder, the voice, from a little further distance, replied audibly—"For his rights! See that you, Landgrave, make no resistance."

The Prince arose in fury; his eyes flashed fire; he clenched his hands in impotent determination. The same voice had annoyed him on former occasions, but never under circumstances which mortified him so deeply. Ashamed that the youthful Countess should be a witness of the insults put upon him, and seeing that it was in vain to pursue his conversation with her further in a situation which exposed him to the sarcasms of a third person, under no restraint of fear or partiality, he adjourned the further prosecution of his inquiry to another opportunity, and for the present gave her leave to depart; a licence which she gladly availed herself of, and retired in fear and perplexity.

Chapter XIX

It was dark as Paulina returned to her convent. Two servants of the Landgrave's preceded her with torches to the great gates of St. Agnes, which was at a very short distance. At that point she entered within the shelter of the convent

gates, and the Prince's servants left her at her own request. No person was now within call but a little page of her own, and perhaps the porter at the convent. But, after the first turn in the garden of St. Agnes, she might almost consider herself as left to her own guardianship ; for the little boy, who followed her, was too young to afford her any effectual help. She felt sorry, as she surveyed the long avenue of ancient trees, which was yet to be traversed before she entered upon the cloisters, that she should have dismissed the servants of the Landgrave. These gardens were easily scaled from the outside, and a ready communication existed between the remotest parts of this very avenue and some of the least reputable parts of Klosterheim. The city now overflowed with people of every rank ; and amongst them were continually recognised, and occasionally challenged, some of the vilest deserters from the Imperial camps. Wallenstein himself, and other Imperial commanders, but, above all, Holk, had attracted to their standards the very refuse of the German jails, and, allowing an unlimited licence of plunder during some periods of their career, had themselves evoked a fiendish spirit of lawless aggression and spoliation, which afterwards they had found it impossible to exorcise within its former limits. People were everywhere obliged to be on their guard, not alone (as heretofore) against the military tyrant or freebooter, but also against the private servants whom they hired into their service. For some time back, suspicious persons had been seen strolling at dusk in the gardens of St. Agnes, or even intruding into the cloisters. Then the recollection of The Masque, now in the very height of his mysterious career, flashed upon Paulina's thoughts. Who knew his motives, or the principle of his mysterious warfare—which at any rate, in its mode, had latterly been marked by bloodshed? As these things came rapidly into her mind, she trembled more from fear than from the wintry wind, which now blew keenly and gustily through the avenue.

The gardens of St. Agnes were extensive, and Paulina yet wanted two hundred yards of reaching the cloisters, when she observed a dusky object stealing along the margin of a little pool, which in parts lay open to the walk, whilst in

others, where the walk receded from the water, the banks were studded with thickets of tall shrubs. Paulina stopped and observed the figure, which she was soon satisfied must be that of a man. At times he rose to his full height; at times he cowered downwards amongst the bushes. That he was not merely seeking a retreat became evident from this, that the best road for such a purpose lay open to him in the opposite direction;—that he was watching herself also became probable from the way in which he seemed to regulate his own motions by hers. At length, whilst Paulina hesitated in some perplexity whether to go forward or to retreat towards the porter's lodge, he suddenly plunged into the thickest belt of shrubs, and left the road clear. Paulina seized the moment, and with a palpitating heart quickened her steps towards the cloister.

She had cleared about one half of the way without obstruction, when suddenly a powerful grasp seized her by the shoulder.

"Stop, lady!" said a deep coarse voice, "stop! I mean no harm. Perhaps I bring your ladyship what will be welcome news."

"But why here?" exclaimed Paulina; "wherefore do you alarm me thus? Oh! heavens! your eyes are wild and fierce; say, is it money that you want?"

"Perhaps I do. To the like of me, lady, you may be sure that money never comes amiss;—but that is not my errand. Here is what will make all clear;"—and, as he spoke, he thrust his hand into the huge pocket within the horseman's cloak which enveloped him. Instead of the pistol or dag, which Paulina anticipated, he drew forth a large packet, carefully sealed. Paulina felt so much relieved at beholding this pledge of the man's pacific intentions that she eagerly pressed her purse into his hand, and was hastening to leave him, when the man stopped her to deliver a verbal message from his master, requesting earnestly that, if she concluded to keep the appointment arranged in the letter, she would not be a minute later than the time fixed.

"And who," said Paulina, "is your master?"

"Surely the General, madam—the young General Maximilian. Many a time and oft have I waited on him when

visiting your ladyship at the Wartebrunn. But here I dare not show my face. Der Henker! if the Landgrave knew that Michael Klotz was in Klosterheim, I reckon that all the ladies in St. Agnes could not beg him a reprieve till to-morrow morning."

"Then, villain!" said the foremost of two men who rushed hastily from the adjoining shrubs, "be assured that the Landgrave does know it. Let this be your warrant!" With these words he fired, and, immediately after, his comrade. Whether the fugitive were wounded could not be known; for he instantly plunged into the water, and, after two or three moments, was heard upon the opposite margin. His pursuers seemed to shrink from this attempt, for they divided and took the opposite extremities of the pool, from the other bank of which they were soon heard animating and directing each other through the darkness.

Paulina, confused and agitated, and anxious above all to examine her letters, took the opportunity of a clear road, and fled in trepidation to the convent.

Chapter XX

The Countess had brought home with her a double subject of anxiety. She knew not to what result the Landgrave's purposes were tending; she feared, also, from this sudden and new method of communication opened with herself so soon after his previous letter, that some unexpected bad fortune might now be threatening her lover. Hastily she tore open the packet, which manifestly contained something larger than letters. The first article which presented itself was a nun's veil, exactly on the pattern of those worn by the nuns of St. Agnes. The accompanying letter sufficiently explained its purpose.

It was in the handwriting, and bore the signature, of Maximilian. In a few words he told her that a sudden communication, but from a quarter entirely to be depended on, had reached him of a great danger impending over her from the Landgrave; that, in the present submission of Klosterheim to that Prince's will, instant flight presented the sole means of delivering her; for which purpose he would him-

self meet her in disguise on the following morning, as early as four o'clock ; or, if that should prove impossible under the circumstances of the case, would send a faithful servant ; —that one or other of them would attend at a particular station, easily recognised by the description added, in a ruinous part of the boundary wall, in the rear of the convent garden. A large travelling cloak would be brought, to draw over the rest of her dress ; but meanwhile, as a means of passing unobserved through the convent grounds, where the Landgrave's agents were continually watching her motions, the nun's veil was almost indispensable. The other circumstances of the journey would be communicated to her upon meeting. In conclusion, the writer implored Paulina to suffer no scruples of false delicacy to withhold her from a step which had so suddenly become necessary to her preservation ; and cautioned her particularly against communicating her intentions to the Lady Abbess, whose sense of decorum might lead her to urge advice at this moment inconsistent with her safety.

Again and again did Paulina read this agitating letter ; again and again did she scrutinize the handwriting, apprehensive that she might be making herself a dupe to some hidden enemy. The handwriting, undoubtedly, had not all the natural freedom which characterised that of Maximilian —it was somewhat stiff in its movement, but not more so than that of his previous letter, in which he had accounted for the slight change from a wound not perfectly healed in his right hand. In other respects, the letter seemed liable to no just suspicion. The danger apprehended from the Landgrave tallied with her own knowledge. The convent grounds were certainly haunted, as the letter alleged, by the Landgrave's people,—of that she had just received a convincing proof ; for, though the two strangers had turned off in pursuit of the messenger who bore Maximilian's letter, yet doubtless their original object of attention had been herself ; they were then posted to watch her motions, and they had avowed themselves in effect the Landgrave's people. That part of the advice, again, which respected the Lady Abbess, seemed judicious, on considering the character of that lady, however much at first sight it might warrant some jealousy of

the writer's purposes, to find him warning her against her best friends. After all, what most disturbed the confidence of Paulina was the countenance of the man who presented the letter; if this man were to be the representative of Maximilian on the following morning, she felt, and was persuaded that she would continue to feel, an invincible repugnance to commit her safety to any such keeping. Upon the whole, she resolved to keep the appointment, but to be guided in her further conduct by circumstances as they should arise at the moment.

That night Paulina's favourite female attendant employed herself in putting into as small a compass as possible the slender wardrobe which they would be able to carry with them. The young Countess herself spent the hours in writing to the Lady Abbess and Sister Madeline, acquainting them with all the circumstances of her interview with the Landgrave,—the certain grounds she had for apprehending some great danger in that quarter,—and the proposals so unexpectedly made to her on the part of Maximilian for evading it. To ask that they should feel no anxiety on her account, in times which made even a successful escape from danger so very hazardous, she acknowledged would be vain; but, in judging of the degree of prudence which she had exhibited on this occasion, she begged them to reflect on the certain dangers which awaited her from the Landgrave; and finally, in excuse for not having sought the advice of so dear a friend as the Lady Abbess, she enclosed the letter upon which she had acted.

These preparations were completed by midnight, after which Paulina sought an hour or two of repose. At three o'clock were celebrated the early matins, attended by the devouter part of the sisterhood, in the chapel. Paulina and her maid took this opportunity for leaving their chamber, and slipping unobserved amongst the crowd who were hurrying on that summons into the cloisters. The organ was pealing solemnly through the labyrinth of passages which led from the interior of the convent; and Paulina's eyes were suffused with tears, as the gentler recollections of her earlier days, and the peace which belongs to those who have abjured this world and its treacherous promises, arose to her mind,

under the influence of the sublime music, in powerful contrast with the tempestuous troubles of Germany—now become so comprehensive in their desolating sweep as to involve even herself, and others of station as elevatcd.

Chapter XXI

The convent clock, chiming the quarters, at length announced that they had reached the appointed hour. Trembling with fear and cold, though muffled up in furs, Paulina and her attendant, with their nuns' veils drawn over their head-dress, sallied forth into the garden. All was profoundly dark, and overspread with the stillness of the grave. The lights within the chapel threw a rich glow through the painted windows ; and here and there, from a few scattered casements in the vast pile of St. Agnes, streamed a few weak rays from a taper or a lamp, indicating the trouble of a sick-bed, or the peace of prayer. But these rare lights did but deepen the massy darkness of all beside ; and Paulina, with her attendant, had much difficulty in making her way to the appointed station. Having reached the wall, however, they pursued its windings, certain of meeting no important obstacles, until they attained a part where their progress was impeded by frequent dilapidations. Here they halted, and in low tones communicated their doubts about the precise locality of the station indicated in the letter, when suddenly a man started up from the ground, and greeted them with the words, " St. Agnes ! all is right," which had been preconcerted as the signal in the letter. This man was courteous and respectful in his manner of speaking, and had nothing of the ruffian voice which belonged to the bearer of the letter. In rapid terms he assured Paulina that " the Young General " had not found circumstances favourable for venturing within the walls, but that he would meet her a few miles beyond the city gates ; and that at present they had no time to lose. Saying this, he unshaded a dark lantern, which showed them a ladder of ropes, attached to the summit of a wall, which at this point was too low to occasion them much uneasiness or difficulty in ascending. But Paulina insisted previously on hearing

something more circumstantial of the manner and style of their escape from the city walls, and in what company their journey would be performed. The man had already done something to conciliate Paulina's confidence by the propriety of his address, which indicated a superior education, and habits of intercourse with people of rank. He explained as much of the plan as seemed necessary for the immediate occasion. A convoy of arms and military stores was leaving the city for the post at Falkenstein. Several carriages, containing privileged persons, to whom the Landgrave or his minister had granted a licence, were taking the benefit of an escort over the forest ; and a bribe in the proper quarter had easily obtained permission, from the officer on duty at the gates, to suffer an additional carriage to pass as one in a great lady's suite, on the simple condition that it should contain none but females ; as persons of that sex were liable to no suspicion of being fugitives from the wrath which was now supposed ready to descend upon the conspirators against the Landgrave.

This explanation reconciled Paulina to the scheme. She felt cheered by the prospect of having other ladies to countenance the mode of her nocturnal journey; and at the worst, hearing this renewed mention of conspirators and punishment, which easily connected itself with all that had passed in her interview with the Landgrave, she felt assured, at any rate, that the dangers she fled from transcended any which she was likely to incur upon her route. Her determination was immediately taken. She passed over the wall with her attendant ; and they found themselves in a narrow lane, close to the city walls, with none but a few ruinous outhouses on either side. A low whistle from the man was soon answered by the rumbling of wheels ; and from some distance, as it seemed, a sort of caleche advanced, drawn by a pair of horses. Paulina and her attendant stepped hastily in, for at the very moment when the carriage drew up a signal gun was heard ; which, as their guide assured them, proclaimed that the escort and the whole train of carriages were at that moment defiling from the city gate. The driver, obeying the directions of the other man, drove off as rapidly as the narrow road and the darkness would allow. A few

turns brought them into the great square in front of the *schloss*; from which a few more open streets, traversed at full gallop, soon brought them into the rear of the convoy, which had been unexpectedly embarrassed in its progress to the gate. From the rear, by dexterous management, they gradually insinuated themselves into the centre; and, contrary to their expectations, amongst the press of baggage-waggons, artillery, and travelling equipages, all tumultuously clamouring to push on, as the best chance of evading Holkerstein in the forest, their own unpretending vehicle passed without other notice than a curse from the officer on duty; which, however, they could not presume to appropriate, as it might be supposed equitably distributed amongst all who stopped the road at the moment.

Paulina shuddered as she looked out upon the line of fierce faces, illuminated by the glare of torches, and mingling with horses' heads, and the gleam of sabres; all around her, the roar of artillery wheels; above her head, the vast arch of the gates, its broad massy shadows resting below; and in the vista beyond, which the archway defined, a mass of blackness in which she rather imagined than saw the interminable solitudes of the forest. Soon the gate was closed; their own carriage passed the tardier parts of the convoy; and, with a dozen or two of others, surrounded by a squadron of dragoons, headed the train. Happy beyond measure at the certainty that she had now cleared the gates of Klosterheim, that she was in the wide open forest—free from a detested tyrant, and on the same side of the gates as her lover, who was doubtless advancing to meet her—she threw herself back in the carriage, and resigned herself to a slumber which the anxieties and watchings of the night had made more than usually welcome.

The city clocks were now heard in the forest, solemnly knelling out the hour of four. Hardly, however, had Paulina slept an hour, when she was gently awaked by her attendant —who had felt it to be her duty to apprise her lady of the change which had occurred in their situation. They had stopped, it seemed, to attach a pair of leaders to their wheel horses; and were now advancing at a thundering pace, separated from the rest of the convoy, and surrounded by a

small escort of cavalry. The darkness was still intense ; and the lights of Klosterheim, which the frequent windings of the road brought often into view, were at this moment conspicuously seen. The castle, from its commanding position, and the convent of St. Agnes, were both easily traced out by means of the lights gleaming from their long ranges of upper windows. A particular turret, which sprang to an almost aerial altitude above the rest of the building, in which it was generally reported that the Landgrave slept, was more distinguishable than any other part of Klosterheim, from one brilliant lustre which shot its rays through a large oriel window. There at this moment was sleeping that unhappy prince, tyrannical and self-tormenting, whose unmanly fears had menaced her own innocence with so much indefinite danger ; whom, in escaping, she knew not if she *had* escaped ; and whose snares, as a rueful misgiving began to suggest, were perhaps gathering faster about her, with every echo which the startled forest returned to the resounding tread of their flying cavalcade. She leaned back again in the carriage ; again she fell asleep ; again she dreamed. But her sleep was unrefreshing ; her dreams were agitated, confused, and haunted by terrible images. And she awoke repeatedly with her cheerful anticipation continually decaying of speedily (perhaps ever again) rejoining her gallant Maximilian. There was indeed yet a possibility that she might be under the superintending care of her lover. But she secretly felt that she was betrayed. And she wept when she reflected that her own precipitance had facilitated the accomplishment of the plot which had perhaps for ever ruined her happiness.

Chapter XXI

Meantime, Paulina awoke from the troubled slumbers into which her fatigues had thrown her, to find herself still flying along as rapidly as four powerful horses could draw their light burden, and still escorted by a considerable body of the Landgrave's dragoons. She was undoubtedly separated from all the rest of the convoy with whom she had left Klosterheim. It was now apparent even to her humble attendant

that they were betrayed; and Paulina reproached herself with having voluntarily co-operated with her enemy's stratagems. Certainly the dangers from which she fled were great and imminent; yet still, in Klosterheim, she derived some protection from the favour of the Lady Abbess. That lady had great powers of a legal nature throughout the city, and still greater influence with a Roman Catholic populace at this particular period, when their Prince had laid himself open to suspicions of favouring Protestant allies; and Paulina bitterly bewailed the imprudence which, in removing her from the convent of St. Agnes, had removed her from her only friends.

It was about noon when the party halted at a solitary house for rest and refreshments. Paulina had heard nothing of the route which they had hitherto taken, nor did she find it easy to collect, from the short and churlish responses of her escort to the few questions she had yet ventured to propose, in what direction their future advance would proceed. A hasty summons bade her alight; and a few steps, under the guidance of a trooper, brought her into a little gloomy wainscoted room, where some refreshments had been already spread upon a table. Adjoining was a small bed-room. And she was desired, with something more civility than she had yet experienced, to consider both as allotted for the use of herself and servant during the time of their stay, which was expected, however, not to exceed the two or three hours requisite for resting the horses.

But that was an arrangement which depended as much upon others as themselves. And in fact a small party, whom the main body of the escort had sent on to patrol the roads in advance, soon returned with the unwelcome news that a formidable corps of Imperialists were out reconnoitring in a direction which might probably lead them across their own line of march, in the event of their proceeding instantly. The orders already issued for advance were therefore countermanded; and a resolution was at length adopted by the leader of the party for taking up their abode during the night in their present very tolerable quarters.

Paulina, wearied and dejected, and recoiling naturally from the indefinite prospects of danger before her, was not

the least rejoiced at this change in the original plan, by which she benefited at any rate to the extent of a quiet shelter for one night more, a blessing which the next day's adventures might deny her, and still more by that postponement of impending evil which is so often welcome to the very firmest minds, when exhausted by toil and affliction. Having this certainty, however, of one night's continuance in her present abode, she requested to have the room made a little more comfortable by the exhilarating blaze of a fire. For this indulgence there were the principal requisites in a hearth and spacious chimney. And an aged crone, probably the sole female servant upon the premises, speedily presented herself with a splendid supply of wood, and the two supporters, or *andirons* (as they were formerly called), for raising the billets so as to allow the air to circulate from below. There was some difficulty at first in kindling the wood ; and the old servant resorted once or twice, after some little apologetic muttering of doubts with herself, to a closet, containing, as Paulina could observe, a considerable body of papers.

The fragments which she left remained strewed upon the ground ; and Paulina, taking them up with a careless air, was suddenly transfixed with astonishment on observing that they were undoubtedly in a handwriting familiar to her eye —the handwriting of the most confidential amongst the Imperial secretaries. Other recollections now rapidly associated themselves together, which led her hastily to open the closet door ; and there, as she had already half expected, she saw the travelling mail stolen from her own carriage, its lock forced, and the remaining contents (for everything bearing a money value had probably vanished on its first disappearance) lying in confusion. Having made this discovery, she hastily closed the door of the closet, resolved to prosecute her investigations in the night-time ; but at present, when she was liable to continual intrusions, to give no occasion for those suspicions, which, once aroused, might end in baffling her design.

Meantime she occupied herself in conjectures upon the particular course of accident which could have brought the trunk and papers into the situation where she had been

fortunate enough to find them. And, with the clue already in her possession, she was not long in making another discovery. She had previously felt some dim sense of recognition, as her eyes wandered over the room ; but had explained it away into some resemblance to one or other of the many strange scenes which she had passed through since leaving Vienna. But now, on retracing the furniture and aspect of the two rooms, she was struck with her own inattention in not having sooner arrived at the discovery that it was their old quarters of Waldenhausen, the very place in which the robbery had been effected, where they had again the prospect of spending the night, and of recovering in part the loss she had sustained.

Midnight came, and the Lady Paulina prepared to avail herself of her opportunities. She drew out the parcel of papers, which was large and miscellaneous in its contents. By far the greater part, as she was happy to observe, were mere copies of originals in the chancery at Vienna ; those related to the civic affairs of Klosterheim, and were probably of a nature not to have been acted upon during the predominance of the Swedish interest in the counsels and administration of that city. With the revival of the Imperial cause, no doubt these orders would be repeated, and with the modifications which new circumstances, and the progress of events, would then have rendered expedient. This portion of the papers, therefore, Paulina willingly restored to their situation in the closet. No evil would arise to any party from their present detention in a place where they were little likely to attract notice from anybody but the old lady in her ministries upon the fire. Suspicion would be also turned aside from herself in appropriating the few papers which remained. These contained too frequent mention of a name dear to herself not to have a considerable value in her eyes ; she was resolved, if possible, to carry them off by concealing them within her bosom ; but at all events, in preparation for any misfortune that might ultimately compel her to resign them, she determined without loss of time to make herself mistress of their contents.

One, and the most important of these documents, was a long and confidential letter from the Emperor to the Town-

Council and the chief heads of conventual houses in Klosterheim. It contained a rapid summary of the principal events in her lover's life, from his infancy, when some dreadful domestic tragedy had thrown him upon the Emperor's protection, to his present period of early manhood, when his own sword and distinguished talents had raised him to a brilliant name and a high military rank in the Imperial service. What were the circumstances of that tragedy, as a case sufficiently well known to those whom he addressed, or to be collected from accompanying papers, the Emperor did not say. But he lavished every variety of praise upon Maximilian, with a liberality that won tears of delight from the solitary young lady, as she now sat at midnight looking over these gracious testimonies to her lover's merit. A theme so delightful to Paulina could not be unseasonable at any time ; and never did her thoughts revert to him more fondly than at this moment, when she so much needed his protecting arm. Yet, the Emperor, she was aware, must have some more special motive for enlarging upon this topic than his general favour to Maximilian. What this could be, in a case so closely connecting the parties to the correspondence on both sides with Klosterheim, a little interested her curiosity. And, on looking more narrowly at the accompanying documents, in one which had been most pointedly referred to by the Emperor she found some disclosures on the subject of her lover's early misfortunes which, whilst they filled her with horror and astonishment, elevated the natural pretensions of Maximilian in point of birth and descent more nearly to a level with the splendour of his self-created distinctions ; and thus crowned him, who already lived in her apprehension as the very model of a hero, with the only advantages that he had ever been supposed to want —the interest which attaches to unmerited misfortunes, and the splendour of an illustrious descent.

As she thus sat, absorbed in the story of her lover's early misfortunes, a murmuring sound of talking attracted her ear, apparently issuing from the closet. Hastily throwing open the door, she found that a thin wooden partition, veined with numerous chinks, was the sole separation between the closet and an adjoining bed-room. The words were startling,

incoherent, and at times raving. Evidently they proceeded from some patient stretched on a bed of sickness, and dealing with a sort of horrors in his distempered fancy worse, it was to be hoped, than any which the records of his own remembrance could bring before him. Sometimes he spoke in the character of one who chases a deer in a forest; sometimes he was close upon the haunches of his game; sometimes it seemed on the point of escaping him. Then the nature of the game changed utterly, and became something human; and a companion was suddenly at his side. With him he quarrelled fiercely about their share in the pursuit and capture. "Oh, my lord, you must not deny it. Look, look! your hands are bloodier than mine. Fie! fie! is there no running water in the forest?—So young as he is, and so noble!—Stand off! he will cover us all with his blood!—Oh, what a groan was that! It will have broke somebody's heart-strings, I think! It would have broken mine when I was younger. But these wars make us all cruel. Yet you are worse than I am." Then again, after a pause, the patient seemed to start up in bed, and he cried out convulsively—"Give me my share, I say. Wherefore must my share be so small?—There he comes past again. Now strike, now, now, now! Get his head down, my lord. —He's off, by G—! Now, if he gets out of the forest, two hours will take him to Vienna. And we must go to Rome: where else could we get absolution? Oh, Heavens! the forest is full of blood; well may our hands be bloody. I see flowers all the way to Vienna: but there is blood below: oh, what a depth! what a depth!—Oh! heart, heart!—See how he starts up from his lair!—Oh! your Highness has deceived me! There are a thousand upon one man!"

In such terms he continued to rave, until Paulina's mind was so much harassed with the constant succession of dreadful images, and frenzied ejaculations, all making report of a life passed in scenes of horror, bloodshed, and violence, that at length, for her own relief, she was obliged to close the door; through which, however, at intervals, piercing shrieks or half-stifled curses still continued to find their way. It struck her as a remarkable coincidence, that something like a slender thread of connexion might be found between the dreadful

story narrated in the Imperial document and the delirious ravings of this poor wretched creature, to whom accident had made her a neighbour for a single night.

Early the next morning, Paulina and her servant were summoned to resume their journey; and three hours more of rapid travelling brought them to the frowning fortress of Lovenstein. Their escort, with any one of whom they had found but few opportunities of communicating, had shown themselves throughout gloomy and obstinately silent. They knew not, therefore, to what distance their journey extended. But from the elaborate ceremonies with which they were here received, and the formal receipt for their persons, which was drawn up and delivered by the governor to the officer commanding their escort, Paulina judged that the castle of Lovenstein would prove to be their final destination.

Chapter XXII

Two days elapsed without any change in Paulina's situation as she found it arranged upon her first arrival at Lovenstein. Her rooms were not incommodious; but the massy barricades at the doors, the grated windows, and the sentinels who mounted guard upon all the avenues which led to her apartments, satisfied her sufficiently that she was a prisoner.

The third morning after her arrival brought her a still more unwelcome proof of this melancholy truth, in the summons which she received to attend a court of criminal justice on the succeeding day, connected with the tenor of its language. Her heart died within her as she found herself called upon to answer as a delinquent on a charge of treasonable conspiracy with various members of the university of Klosterheim against the sovereign prince, the Landgrave of X——. Witnesses in exculpation, whom could she produce? Or how defend herself before a tribunal where all alike, judge, evidence, accuser, were in effect one and the same malignant enemy?—In what way she could have come to be connected in the Landgrave's mind with a charge of treason against his princely rights, she found it difficult to explain, unless the mere fact of having carried the Imperial despatches in the trunks about her carriages were sufficient to implicate

her as a secret emissary or agent concerned in the Imperial diplomacy. But she strongly suspected that some deep misapprehension existed in the Landgrave's mind; and its origin, she fancied, might be found in the refined knavery of their ruffian host at Waldenhausen, in making his market of the papers which he had purloined. Bringing them forward separately and by piecemeal, he had probably hoped to receive so many separate rewards. But, as it would often happen that one paper was necessary in the way of explanation to another, and the whole, perhaps, were almost essential to the proper understanding of any one, the result would inevitably be—grievously to mislead the Landgrave. Further communications, indeed, would have tended to disabuse the Prince of any delusions raised in this way. But it was probable, as Paulina had recently learned in passing through Waldenhausen, that the ruffian's illness and delirium had put a stop to any further communication of papers; and thus the misconceptions which he had caused were perpetuated in the Landgrave's mind.

It was on the third day after Paulina's arrival that she was first placed before the court. The presiding officer in this tribunal was the governor of the fortress, a tried soldier, but a ruffian of low habits and cruel nature. He had risen under the Landgrave's patronage as an adventurer of desperate courage, ready for any service, however disreputable, careless alike of peril or of infamy. In common with many partisan officers who had sprung from the ranks in this adventurous war, seeing on every side, and in the highest quarters, princes as well as supreme commanders, the uttermost contempt of justice and moral principle,—he had fought his way to distinction and fortune through every species of ignoble cruelty. He had passed from service to service, as he saw an opening for his own peculiar interest or merit, everywhere valued as a soldier of desperate enterprise, everywhere abhorred as a man. By birth a Croatian, he had exhibited himself as one of the most savage leaders of that order of barbarians in the sack of Magdeburgh, where he served under Tilly: but, latterly, he had taken service again under his original patron the Landgrave, who had lured him back to his interest by the rank of general and the governorship of Lovenstein.

This brutal officer, who had latterly lived in a state of continual intoxication, was the judge before whom the lovely and innocent Paulina was now arraigned on a charge affecting her life. In fact, it became obvious that the process was not designed for any other purpose than to save appearances,—and, if that should seem possible, to extract further discoveries from the prisoner. The general acted as supreme arbiter in every question of rights and power that arose to the court in the administration of their almost unlimited functions. Doubts he allowed of none ; and cut every knot of jurisprudence, whether form or substance, by his Croatian sabre. Two assessors, however, he willingly received upon his bench of justice, to relieve him from the fatigue and difficulty of conducting a perplexed examination.

These assessors were lawyers of a low class, who tempered the exercise of their official duties with as few scruples of justice, and as little regard to the restraints of courtesy, as their military principal. The three judges were almost equally ferocious, and tools equally abject of the unprincipled sovereign whom they served.

A sovereign, however, he was ; and Paulina was well aware that in his own states he had the power of life and death. She had good reason to see that her own death was resolved on ; still she neglected no means of honourable self-defence. In a tone of mingled sweetness and dignity she maintained her innocence of all that was alleged against her ; protested that she was unacquainted with the tenor of any papers which might have been found in her trunks ; and claimed her privilege, as a subject of the Emperor, in bar of all right on the Landgrave's part to call her to account. These pleas were overruled ; and, when she further acquainted the court that she was a near relative of the Emperor's, and ventured to hint at the vengeance with which his Imperial Majesty would not fail to visit so bloody a contempt of justice, she was surprised to find this menace treated with mockery and laughter. In reality, the long habit of fighting for and against all the Princes of Germany had given to the Croatian general a disregard for any of them, except on the single consideration of receiving his pay at the moment ; and a single circumstance unknown to Paulina, in the final

determination of the Landgrave to earn a merit with his Swedish allies by breaking off all terms of reserve or compromise with the Imperial court, impressed a savage desperation on the tone of that Prince's policy at this particular time. The Landgrave had resolved to stake his all upon a single throw. A battle was now expected, which, if favourable to the Swedes, would lay open the road to Vienna. The Landgrave was prepared to abide the issue ; not, perhaps, wholly uninfluenced to so extreme a course by the very paper which had been robbed from Paulina. His policy was known to his agents, and conspicuously influenced their manner of receiving her menace.

Menaces, they informed her, came with better grace from those who had the power to enforce them ; and with a brutal scoff the Croatian bade her merit their indulgence by frank discoveries and voluntary confessions. He insisted on knowing the nature of the connexion which the Imperial Colonel of horse, Maximilian, had maintained with the students of Klosterheim ; and upon other discoveries, with respect to most of which Paulina was too imperfectly informed herself to be capable of giving any light. Her earnest declarations to this effect were treated with disregard. She was dismissed for the present, but with an intimation that on the morrow she must prepare herself with a more complying temper, or with a sort of firmness in maintaining her resolution, which would not perhaps long resist those means which the law had placed at their disposal for dealing with the refractory and obstinate.

Chapter XXIII

Paulina meditated earnestly upon the import of this parting threat. The more she considered it, the less could she doubt that these fierce inquisitors had meant to threaten her with torture. She felt the whole indignity of such a threat, though she could hardly bring herself to believe them in earnest.

On the following morning she was summoned early before her judges. They had not yet assembled ; but some of the lower officials were pacing up and down, exchanging unintelligible jokes, looking sometimes at herself, sometimes at

an iron machine, with a complex arrangement of wheels and screws. Dark were the suspicions which assaulted Paulina as this framework, or couch of iron, first met her eyes—and perhaps some of the jests circulating amongst the brutal ministers of her brutal judges would have been intelligible enough, had she condescended to turn her attention in that direction. Meantime her doubts were otherwise dispersed. The Croatian officer now entered the room alone, his assessors having probably declined participation in that part of the horrid functions which remained under the Landgrave's commission.

This man, presenting a paper with a long list of interrogatories to Paulina, bade her now rehearse verbally the sum of the answers which she designed to give. Running rapidly through them, Paulina replied with dignity, yet trembling and agitated, that these were questions which in any sense she could not answer—many of them referring to points on which she had no knowledge, and none of them being consistent with the gratitude and friendship so largely due on her side to the persons implicated in the bearing of these questions.

"Then you refuse?"

"Certainly; there are three questions only which it is in my power to answer at all—even these imperfectly. Answers such as you expect would load me with dishonour."

"Then you refuse?"

"For the reasons I have stated, undoubtedly I do."

"Once more—you refuse?"

"I refuse, certainly; but do me the justice to record my reasons."

"Reasons!—ha! ha! they had need to be strong ones if they will hold out against the arguments of this pretty plaything," laying his hand upon the machine. "However, the choice is yours, not mine."

So saying, he made a sign to the attendants. One began to move the machine, and work the screws or raise the clanking grates and framework, with a savage din,—two others bared their arms. Paulina looked on motionless with sudden horror, and palpitating with fear.

The Croatian nodded to the men; and then in a loud

commanding voice exclaimed—"The question in the first degree!"

At this moment Paulina recovered her strength, which the first panic had dispelled. She saw a man approach her with a ferocious grin of exultation. Another, with the same horrid expression of countenance, carried a large vase of water.

The whole indignity of the scene flashed full upon her mind. She, a lady of the Imperial house, threatened with torture by the base agent of a titled ruffian! She who owed him no duty—had violated no claim of hospitality, though in her own person all had been atrociously outraged!

Thoughts like these flew rapidly through her brain, when suddenly a door opened behind her. It was an attendant with some implements for tightening or relaxing bolts. The bare-armed ruffian at this moment raised his arm to seize hers. Shrinking from the pollution of his accursed touch, Paulina turned hastily round, darted through the open door, and fled, like a dove pursued by vultures, along the passages which stretched before her. Already she felt their hot breathing upon her neck, already the foremost had raised his hand to arrest her, when a sudden turn brought her full upon a band of young women, tending upon one of superior rank, manifestly their mistress.

"Oh, madam!" exclaimed Paulina, "save me! save me!" —and with these words fell exhausted at the lady's feet.

This female — young, beautiful, and with a touching pensiveness of manners—raised her tenderly in her arms, and with a sisterly tone of affection bade her fear nothing; —and the respectful manner in which the officials retired at her command satisfied Paulina that she stood in some very near relation to the Landgrave—in reality she soon spoke of him as her father. "Is it possible," thought Paulina to herself, "that this innocent and lovely child" (for she was not more than seventeen, though with a prematurity of womanly person that raised her to a level with Paulina's heart) "should owe the affection of a daughter to a tyrant so savage as the Landgrave?"

She found, however, that the gentle Princess Adeline owed to her own childlike simplicity the best gift that one so situated could have received from the bounty of Heaven.

The barbarities exercised by the Croatian governor she charged entirely upon his own brutal nature; and so confirmed was she in this view by Paulina's own case that she now resolved upon executing a resolution she had long projected. Her father's confidence was basely abused; this she said, and devoutly believed. "No part of the truth ever reached him; her own letters remained disregarded in a way which was irreconcilable with the testimonies of profound affection to herself daily showered upon her by his Highness."

In reality, this sole child of the Landgrave was also the one sole jewel that gave a value in his eyes to his else desolate life. Everything in and about the castle of Lovenstein was placed under her absolute control; even the brutal Croatian governor knew that no plea or extremity of circumstances would atone for one act of disobedience to her orders, —and hence it was that the ministers of this tyrant retired with so much prompt obedience to her commands.

Experience, however, had taught the Princess that, not unfrequently, orders apparently obeyed were afterwards secretly evaded; and the disregard paid of late to her letters of complaint satisfied her that they were stifled and suppressed by the governor. Paulina, therefore, whom a few hours of unrestrained intercourse had made interesting to her heart, she would not suffer even to sleep apart from herself. Her own agitation on the poor prisoner's behalf became greater even than that of Paulina; and, as fresh circumstances of suspicion daily arose in the savage governor's deportment, she now took in good earnest those measures for escape to Klosterheim which she had long arranged. In this purpose she was greatly assisted by the absolute authority which her father had conceded to her over everything but the mere military arrangements in the fortress. Under the colour of an excursion, such as she had been daily accustomed to take, she found no difficulty in placing Paulina, sufficiently disguised, amongst her own servants. At a proper point of the road, Paulina and a few attendants, with the Princess herself, issued from their coaches, and, bidding them await their return in half an hour's interval, by that time were far advanced upon their road to the military post of Falkenberg.

Chapter XXIV

In twenty days the mysterious Masque had summoned the Landgrave "to answer, for crimes unatoned, before a tribunal where no power but that of innocence could avail him." These days were nearly expired. The morning of the Twentieth had arrived.

There were two interpretations of this summons. By many it was believed that the tribunal contemplated was that of the Emperor; and that, by some mysterious plot, which could not be more difficult of execution than others which had actually been accomplished by The Masque, on this day the Landgrave would be carried off to Vienna. Others, again, understanding by the tribunal, in the same sense, the Imperial chamber of criminal justice, believed it possible to fulfil the summons in some way less liable to delay or uncertainty than by a long journey to Vienna through a country beset with enemies. But a third party, differing from both the others, understood by the tribunal where innocence was the only shield—the judgment seat of heaven; and believed that on this day justice would be executed on the Landgrave, for crimes known and unknown, by a public and memorable death. Under any interpretation, however, nobody amongst the citizens could venture peremptorily to deny, after the issue of the masqued ball, and of so many other public denunciations, that The Masque would keep his word to the letter.

It followed of necessity that everybody was on the tiptoe of suspense, and that the interest hanging upon the issue of this night's events swallowed up all other anxieties, of whatsoever nature. Even the battle which was now daily expected between the Imperial and Swedish armies ceased to occupy the hearts and conversation of the citizens. Domestic and public concerns alike gave way to the coming catastrophe so solemnly denounced by The Masque.

The Landgrave alone maintained a gloomy reserve, and the expression of a haughty disdain. He had resolved to meet the summons with the liveliest expression of defiance, by fixing this evening for a second masqued ball, upon a greater scale than the first. In doing this he acted advisedly,

and with the counsel of his Swedish allies. They represented to him that the issue of the approaching battle might be relied upon as pretty nearly certain ; all the indications were indeed generally thought to promise a decisive turn in their favour ; but, in the worst case, no defeat of the Swedish army in this war had ever been complete ; that the bulk of the retreating army, if the Swedes should be obliged to retreat, would take the road to Klosterheim, and would furnish to himself a garrison capable of holding the city for many months to come (and *that* would not fail to bring many fresh chances to all of them), whilst to his new and cordial allies this course would offer a secure retreat from pursuing enemies, and a satisfactory proof of his own fidelity. This even in the worst case ; whereas, in the better and more probable one, of a victory to the Swedes, to maintain the city but for a day or two longer against internal conspirators, and the secret co-operators outside, would be in effect to ratify any victory which the Swedes might gain by putting into their hands at a critical moment one of its most splendid trophies and guarantees.

These counsels fell too much into the Landgrave's own way of thinking to meet with any demurs from him. It was agreed, therefore, that as many Swedish troops as could at this important moment be spared should be introduced into the halls and saloons of the castle on the eventful evening, disguised as masquers. These were about four hundred; and other arrangements were made, equally mysterious, and some of them known only to the Landgrave.

At seven o'clock, as on the former occasion, the company began to assemble. The same rooms were thrown open ; but, as the party was now far more numerous, and was made more comprehensive in point of rank, in order to include all who were involved in the conspiracy which had been some time maturing in Klosterheim, fresh suites of rooms were judged necessary, on the pretext of giving fuller effect to the princely hospitalities of the Landgrave. And, on this occasion, according to an old privilege conceded in the case of coronations or galas of magnificence by the Lady Abbess of St. Agnes, the partition walls were removed between the great hall of the *schloss* and the refectory of that immense

convent; so that the two vast establishments, which on one side were contiguous to each other, were thus laid into one.

The company had now continued to pour in for two hours. The palace and the refectory of the convent were now overflowing with lights and splendid masques; the avenues and corridors rang with music; and, though every heart was throbbing with fear and suspense, no outward expression was wanting of joy and festal pleasure. For the present, all was calm around the slumbering volcano.

Suddenly the Count St. Aldenheim, who was standing with arms folded, and surveying the brilliant scene, felt some one touch his hand, in the way concerted amongst the conspirators as a private signal of recognition. He turned, and recognised his friend, the Baron Adelort, who saluted him with three emphatic words—"We are betrayed!"—Then, after a pause, "Follow me."

St. Aldenheim made his way through the glittering crowds, and pressed after his conductor into one of the most private corridors.

"Fear not," said the other, "that we shall be watched. Vigilance is no longer necessary to our crafty enemy. He has already triumphed. Every avenue of escape is barred and secured against us: every outlet of the palace is occupied by the Landgrave's troops. Not a man of us will return alive."

"Heaven forbid we should prove ourselves such gulls! You are but jesting, my friend."

"Would to God I were! my information is but too certain. Something I have overheard by accident; something has been told me; and something I have seen. Come you also, Count, and see what I will show you: then judge for yourself."

So saying, he led St. Aldenheim by a little circuit of passages to a doorway, through which they passed into a hall of vast proportions; to judge by the catafalques, and mural monuments, scattered at intervals along the vast expanse of its walls, this seemed to be the ante-chapel of St. Agnes. In fact it was so; a few faint lights glimmered through the gloomy extent of this immense chamber, placed (according to the Catholic rite) at the shrine of the saint. Feeble as it was, however, the light was powerful enough to

display in the centre a pile of scaffolding covered with black drapery. Standing at the foot, they could trace the outlines of a stage at the summit, fenced in with a railing, a block, and the other apparatus for the solemnity of a public execution, whilst the sawdust below their feet ascertained the spot in which the heads were to fall.

"Shall we ascend and rehearse our parts?" asked the Count: "for methinks everything is prepared, except the headsman and the spectators. A plague on the inhospitable knave!"

"Yes, St. Aldenheim, all is prepared—even to the sufferers. On that list, you stand foremost. Believe me, I speak with knowledge; no matter where gained. It is certain."

"Well, *necessitas non habet legem*; and he that dies on Tuesday will never catch cold on Wednesday. But still, that comfort is something of the coldest. Think you that none better could be had?"

"As how?"

"Revenge, *par exemple*; a little revenge. Might one not screw the neck of this base Prince, who abuses the confidence of cavaliers so perfidiously? To die I care not; but to be caught in a trap, and die like a rat lured by a bait of toasted cheese—Faugh! my countly blood rebels against it!"

"Something might surely be done, if we could muster in any strength. That is, we might die sword in hand; but——"

"Enough! I ask no more. Now let us go. We will separately pace the rooms, draw together as many of our party as we can single out, and then proclaim ourselves. Let each answer for one victim. I'll take his Highness for my share."

With this purpose, and thus forewarned of the dreadful fate at hand, they left the gloomy ante-chapel, traversed the long suite of entertaining rooms, and collected as many as could easily be detached from the dances without too much pointing out their own motions to the attention of all present. The Count St. Aldenheim was seen rapidly explaining to them the circumstances of their dreadful situation; whilst hands uplifted, or suddenly applied to the hilt of the sword, with other gestures of sudden emotion, expressed the different impressions of rage or fear which, under each variety of character, impressed the several hearers. Some of

them, however, were too unguarded in their motions; and the energy of their gesticulations had now begun to attract the attention of the company.

The Landgrave himself had his eye upon them. But at this moment his attention was drawn off by an uproar of confusion in an antechamber, which argued some tragical importance in the cause that could prompt so sudden a disregard for the restraints of time and place.

Chapter XXV

His Highness issued from the room in consternation, followed by many of the company. In the very centre of the anteroom, booted and spurred, bearing all the marks of extreme haste, panic, and confusion, stood a Swedish officer, dealing forth hasty fragments of some heart-shaking intelligence. "All is lost!" said he, "not a regiment has escaped!" "And the place?" exclaimed a press of inquirers. "Nordlingen." "And which way has the Swedish army retreated?" demanded a masque behind him.

"Retreat!" retorted the officer, "I tell you there *is* no retreat. All have perished. The army is no more. Horse, foot, artillery—all is wrecked, crushed, annihilated. Whatever yet lives is in the power of the Imperialists."

At this moment the Landgrave came up, and in every way strove to check these too liberal communications. He frowned; the officer saw him not. He laid his hand on the officer's arm, but all in vain. He spoke, but the officer knew not, or forgot his rank. Panic and immeasurable sorrow had crushed his heart; he cared not for restraints; decorum and ceremony were become idle words. The Swedish army had perished. The greatest disaster of the whole Thirty Years' War had fallen upon his countrymen. His own eyes had witnessed the tragedy, and he had no power to check or restrain that which made his heart overflow.

The Landgrave retired. But in half an hour the banquet was announced; and his Highness had so much command over his own feelings that he took his seat at the table. He seemed tranquil in the midst of general agitation; for

the company were distracted by various passions. Some exulted in the great victory of the Imperialists, and the approaching liberation of Klosterheim. Some who were in the secret anticipated with horror the coming tragedy of vengeance upon his enemies which the Landgrave had prepared for this night. Some were filled with suspense and awe on the probable fulfilment in some way or other, doubtful as to the mode, but tragic (it was not doubted) for the result, of The Masque's mysterious denunciation.

Under such circumstances of universal agitation and suspense,—for on one side or other it seemed inevitable that this night must produce a tragical catastrophe,—it was not extraordinary that silence and embarrassment should at one moment take possession of the company, and at another that kind of forced and intermitting gaiety which still more forcibly proclaimed the trepidation which really mastered the spirits of the assemblage. The banquet was magnificent: but it moved heavily and in sadness. The music, which broke the silence at intervals, was animating and triumphant; but it had no power to disperse the gloom which hung over the evening, and which was gathering strength conspicuously as the hours advanced to midnight.

As the clock struck eleven, the orchestra had suddenly become silent; and, as no buzz of conversation succeeded, the anxiety of expectation became more painfully irritating. The whole vast assemblage was hushed, gazing at the doors —at each other—or watching, stealthily, the Landgrave's countenance. Suddenly a sound was heard in an anteroom: a page entered with a step hurried and discomposed, advanced to the Landgrave's seat, and bending downwards, whispered some news or message to that Prince, of which not a syllable could be caught by the company. Whatever were its import, it could not be collected, from any very marked change on the features of him to whom it was addressed, that he participated in the emotions of the messenger, which were obviously those of grief or panic—perhaps of both united. Some even fancied that a transient expression of malignant exultation crossed the Landgrave's countenance at this moment. But, if that were so, it was banished as suddenly;

and, in the next instant the Prince arose with a leisurely motion; and, with a very successful affectation (if such it were) of extreme tranquillity, he moved forwards to one of the anterooms, in which, as it now appeared, some person was awaiting his presence.

Who, and on what errand?—These were the questions which now racked the curiosity of those among the company who had least concern in the final event, and more painfully interested others whose fate was consciously dependent upon the accidents which the next hour might happen to bring up. Silence still continuing to prevail, and, if possible, deeper silence than before, it was inevitable that all the company—those even whose honourable temper would least have brooked any settled purpose of surprising the Landgrave's secrets—should, in some measure, become a party to what was now passing in the anteroom.

The voice of the Landgrave was heard at times—briefly and somewhat sternly in reply—but apparently in the tone of one who is thrown upon the necessity of self-defence. On the other side, the speaker was earnest, solemn, and (as it seemed) upon an office of menace or upbraiding. For a time, however, the tones were low and subdued; but, as the passion of the scene advanced, less restraint was observed on both sides; and at length many believed that in the stranger's voice they recognised that of the Lady Abbess; and it was some corroboration of this conjecture that the name of Paulina began now frequently to be caught, and in connexion with ominous words, indicating some dreadful fate supposed to have befallen her.

A few moments dispersed all doubts. The tones of bitter and angry reproach rose louder than before; they were, without doubt, those of the Abbess. She charged the blood of Paulina upon the Landgrave's head; denounced the instant vengeance of the Emperor for so great an atrocity; and, if that could be evaded, bade him expect certain retribution from Heaven for so wanton and useless an effusion of innocent blood.

The Landgrave replied in a lower key; and his words were few and rapid. That they were words of fierce recrimination was easily collected from the tone; and in the

next minute the parties separated, with little ceremony (as was sufficiently evident) on either side, and with mutual wrath. The Landgrave re-entered the banqueting-room—his features discomposed and inflated with passion ; but such was his self-command, and so habitual his dissimulation, that, by the time he reached his seat, all traces of agitation had disappeared ; his countenance had resumed its usual expression of stern serenity, and his manners their usual air of perfect self-possession.

The clock of St. Agnes struck twelve. At that sound the Landgrave rose. "Friends, and illustrious strangers!" said he, "I have caused one seat to be left empty for that blood-stained Masque who summoned me to answer on this night for a crime which he could not name, at a bar which no man knows. His summons you heard. Its fulfilment is yet to come. But I suppose few of us are weak enough to expect——"

"That The Masque of Klosterheim will ever break his engagements," said a deep voice, suddenly interrupting the Landgrave. All eyes were directed to the sound ; and behold! there stood The Masque, and seated himself quietly in the chair which had been left vacant for his reception.

"It is well!" said the Landgrave ; but the air of vexation and panic with which he sank back into his seat belied his words. Rising again, after a pause, with some agitation he said, "Audacious criminal! since last we met, I have learned to know you, and to appreciate your purposes. It is now fit they should be known to Klosterheim. A scene of justice awaits you at present, which will teach this city to understand the delusions which could build any part of her hopes upon yourself.—Citizens and friends, not I, but these dark criminals and interlopers whom you will presently see revealed in their true colours, are answerable for that interruption to the course of our peaceful festivities which will presently be brought before you. Not I, but they are responsible."

So saying, the Landgrave arose, and the whole of the immense audience, who now resumed their masques, and prepared to follow whither his Highness should lead. With

the haste of one who fears he may be anticipated in his purpose, and the fury of some bird of prey apprehending that his struggling victim may be yet torn from his talons, the Prince hurried onwards to the antechapel. Innumerable torches now illuminated its darkness; in other respects it remained as St. Aldenheim had left it.

The Swedish masques had many of them withdrawn from the gala on hearing the dreadful day of Nordlingen. But enough remained, when strengthened by the bodyguard of the Landgrave, to make up a corps of nearly five hundred men. Under the command of Colonel Von Aremberg, part of them now enclosed the scaffold, and part prepared to seize the persons who were pointed out to them as conspirators. Amongst these stood foremost The Masque.

Shaking off those who attempted to lay hands upon him, he strode disdainfully within the ring; and then turning to the Landgrave, he said—

"Prince, for once be generous; accept me as a ransom for the rest."

The Landgrave smiled sarcastically. "That were an unequal bargain, methinks, to take a part in exchange for the whole."

"The whole? And where is then your assurance of the whole?"

"Who should now make it doubtful? There is the block; the headsman is at hand. What hand can deliver from this extremity even you, Sir Masque?"

"That which has many times delivered me from a greater. It seems, Prince, that you forget the last days in the history of Klosterheim. He that rules by night in Klosterheim may well expect a greater favour than this when he descends to sue for it."

The Landgrave smiled contemptuously. "But again I ask you, sir, will you on any terms grant immunity to these young men?"

"You sue as vainly for others as you would do for yourself."

"Then all grace is hopeless?" The Landgrave vouchsafed no answer, but made signals to Von Aremberg.

"Gentlemen, cavaliers, citizens of Klosterheim, you that

are not involved in the Landgrave's suspicions," said The Masque appealingly, "will you not join me in the intercession I offer for these young friends, who are else to perish unjudged, by blank edict of martial law?"

The citizens of Klosterheim interceded with ineffectual supplication. "Gentlemen, you waste your breath; they die without reprieve," replied the Landgrave.

"Will your Highness spare none?"

"Not one," he exclaimed angrily, "not the youngest amongst them."

"Nor grant a day's respite to him who may appear on examination the least criminal of the whole?"

"A day's respite? No, nor half an hour's.—Headsman, be ready.—Soldiers, lay the heads of the prisoners ready for the axe."

"Detested Prince, now look to your own!"

With a succession of passions flying over his face, rage, disdain, suspicion, the Landgrave looked round upon The Masque as he uttered these words, and with pallid, ghastly consternation, beheld him raise to his lips a hunting horn which depended from his neck. He blew a blast, which was immediately answered from within. Silence as of the grave ensued. All eyes were turned in the direction of the answer. Expectation was at its summit; and in less than a minute solemnly uprose the curtain which divided the chapel from the ante-chapel, revealing a scene that smote many hearts with awe, and the consciences of some with as much horror as if it had really been that final tribunal which numbers believed The Masque to have denounced.

Chapter XXVI

The great chapel of St. Agnes, the immemorial hall of coronation for the Landgraves of X——, was capable of containing with ease from seven to eight thousand spectators. Nearly that number was now collected in the galleries, which, on the recurrence of that great occasion, or of a royal marriage, were usually assigned to the spectators. These were all equipped in burnished arms, the very *élite* of the Imperial army. Resistance was hopeless; in a single moment the

Landgrave saw himself dispossessed of all his hopes by an overwhelming force, the advanced guard in fact of the victorious Imperialists, now fresh from Nordlingen.

On the marble area of the chapel, level with their own position, were arranged a brilliant staff of officers; and a little in advance of them, so as almost to reach the antechapel, stood the Imperial Legate or ambassador. This nobleman advanced to the crowd of Klosterheimers, and spoke thus:—

"Citizens of Klosterheim, I bring you from the Emperor your true and lawful Landgrave, Maximilian, son of your last beloved Prince."

Both chapels resounded with acclamations; and the troops presented arms.

"Show us our Prince! let us pay him our homage!" echoed from every mouth.

"This is mere treason!" exclaimed the Usurper. "The Emperor invites treason against his own throne who undermines that of other Princes. The late Landgrave had no son; so much is known to you all."

"None that was known to his murderer," replied The Masque; "else had he met no better fate than his unhappy father."

"Murderer!—And what art thou, blood-polluted Masque, with hands yet reeking from the blood of all who refused to join the conspiracy against your lawful Prince?"

"Citizens of Klosterheim," said the Legate, "first let the Emperor's friend be assoiled from all injurious thoughts. Those whom ye believe to have been removed by murder are here to speak for themselves."

Upon this the whole line of those who had mysteriously disappeared from Klosterheim presented themselves to the welcome of their astonished friends.

"These," said the Legate, "quitted Klosterheim, even by the same secret passages which enabled us to enter it, and for the self-same purpose,—to prepare the path for the restoration of the true heir, Maximilian the Fourth, whom in this noble Prince you behold, and whom may God long preserve!"

Saying this, to the wonder of the whole assembly he led

forward The Masque, whom nobody had yet suspected for more than an agent of the true heir.

The Landgrave, meantime, thus suddenly denounced as a tyrant—usurper—murderer, had stood aloof, and had given but a slight attention to the latter words of the Legate. A race of passions had traversed his countenance, chasing each other in flying succession. But by a prodigious effort he recalled himself to the scene before him ; and, striding up to the crowd, of which the Legate was the central figure, he raised his arm with a gesture of indignation, and protested vehemently that the assassination of Maximilian's father had been iniquitously charged upon himself :—"And yet," said he, "upon that one gratuitous assumption have been built all the other foul suspicions directed against my person."

"Pardon me, sir," replied the Legate, "the evidences were such as satisfied the Emperor and his Council ; and he showed it by the vigilance with which he watched over the Prince Maximilian, and the anxiety with which he kept him from approaching your Highness until his pretensions could be established by arms. But, if more direct evidence were wanting, since yesterday we have had it in the dying confession of the very agent employed to strike the fatal blow. That man died last night penitent and contrite, having fully unburdened his conscience, at Waldenhausen. With evidence so overwhelming, the Emperor exacts no further sacrifice from your Highness than that of retirement from public life, to any one of your own castles in your patrimonial principality of Oberhornstein.—But, now for a more pleasing duty. Citizens of Klosterheim, welcome your young Landgrave in the Emperor's name : and to-morrow you shall welcome also your future Landgravine, the lovely Countess Paulina, cousin to the Emperor, my master, and cousin also to your noble young Landgrave."

"No !" exclaimed the malignant usurper, "her you shall never see alive : for that, be well assured, I have taken care."

"Vile, unworthy Prince !" replied Maximilian, his eyes kindling with passion, "know that your intentions, so worthy of a fiend, towards that most innocent of ladies, have been confounded and brought to nothing by your own gentle daughter, worthy of a far nobler father."

"If you speak of my directions for administering the torture, a matter in which I presume that I exercised no unusual privilege amongst German sovereigns, you are right. But it was not that of which I spoke."

"Of what else, then?—The Lady Paulina has escaped."

"True, to Falkenberg. But, doubtless, young Landgrave, you have heard of such a thing as the intercepting of a fugitive prisoner; in such a case you know the punishment which martial law awards. The governor at Falkenberg had his orders." These last significant words he uttered in a tone of peculiar meaning. His eyes sparkled with bright gleams of malice and of savage vengeance, rioting in its completion.

"Oh, heart—heart!" exclaimed Maximilian, "can this be possible?"

The Imperial Legate and all present crowded around him to suggest such consolation as they could. Some offered to ride off express to Falkenberg; some argued that the Lady Paulina had been seen within the last hour. But the hellish exulter in ruined happiness destroyed that hope as soon as it dawned:—

"Children!" said he, "foolish children! cherish not such chimeras. Me you have destroyed, Landgrave, and the prospects of my house. Now perish yourself.—Look there: is that the form of one who lives and breathes?"

All present turned to the scaffold, in which direction he pointed, and now first remarked, covered with a black pall, and brought hither doubtless to aggravate the pangs of death to Maximilian, what seemed but too certainly a female corpse. The stature, the fine swell of the bust, the rich outline of the form, all pointed to the same conclusion; and in this recumbent attitude, it seemed but too clearly to present the magnificent proportions of Paulina.

There was a dead silence. Who could endure to break it? Who make the effort which was for ever to fix the fate of Maximilian?

He himself could not. At last the deposed usurper, craving for the consummation of his vengeance, himself strode forward; with one savage grasp he tore away the pall, and below it lay the innocent features, sleeping in her last tranquil slumber, of his own gentle-minded daughter.

No heart was found savage enough to exult—the sorrow even of such a father was sacred. Death, and through his own orders, had struck the only being whom he had ever loved ; and the petrific mace of the fell destroyer seemed to have smitten his own heart and withered its hopes for ever.

Everybody comprehended the mistake in a moment. Paulina had lingered at Waldenhausen under the protection of an Imperial corps, which she had met in her flight. The tyrant, who had heard of her escape, but apprehended no necessity for such a step on the part of his daughter, had issued sudden orders to the officer commanding the military post at Falkenberg, to seize and shoot the female prisoner escaping from confinement, without allowing any explanations whatsoever, on her arrival at Falkenberg. This precaution he had adopted in part to intercept any denunciation of the Emperor's vengeance which Paulina might address to the officer. As a rude soldier, accustomed to obey the letter of his orders, this commandant had executed his commission ; and the gentle Adeline, who had naturally hastened to the protection of her father's chateau, surrendered her breath meekly and with resignation to what she believed a simple act of military violence ; and this she did before she could know a syllable of her father's guilt or his fall, and without any the least reason for supposing him connected with the occasion of her early death.

At this moment Paulina made her appearance unexpectedly, to reassure the young Landgrave by her presence, and to weep over her young friend, whom she had lost almost before she had come to know her. The scaffold, the corpse, and the other images of sorrow, were then withdrawn ; — seven thousand Imperial troops presented arms to the youthful Landgrave and the future Landgravine, the brilliant favourites of the Emperor ;—the immense area of St. Agnes resounded with the congratulations of Klosterheim ;—and as the magnificent cortege moved off to the interior of the *schloss*, the swell of the Coronation anthem rising in peals upon the ear from the choir of St. Agnes, and from the military bands of the Imperial troops, awoke the promise of happier days, and of more equitable government, to the long-harassed inhabitants of Klosterheim.

The Klosterheimers knew enough already, personally or by questions easily answered in every quarter, to supply any links which were wanting in the rapid explanations of the Legate. Nevertheless, that nothing might remain liable to misapprehension or cavil, a short manifesto was this night circulated by the new government, from which the following facts are abstracted :—

The last rightful Landgrave, whilst yet a young man, had been assassinated in the forest when hunting. A year or two before this catastrophe he had contracted what, from the circumstances, was presumed, at the time, to be a *morganatic*, or left-handed marriage, with a lady of high birth, nearly connected with the Imperial House. The effect of such a marriage went to incapacitate the children who might be born under it, male or female, from succeeding. On that account, as well as because current report had represented her as childless, the widow lady escaped all attempts from the assassin. Meantime this lady, who was no other than Sister Madeline, had been thus indebted for her safety to two rumours, which were in fact equally false. She soon found means of convincing the Emperor, who had been the bosom friend of her princely husband, that her marriage was a perfect one, and conferred the fullest rights of succession upon her infant son Maximilian, whom at the earliest age, and with the utmost secrecy, she had committed to the care of his Imperial Majesty. This powerful guardian had in every way watched over the interests of the young Prince. But the Thirty Years' War had thrown all Germany into distractions, which for a time thwarted the Emperor, and favoured the views of the usurper. Latterly also another question had arisen on the city and dependencies of Klosterheim as distinct from the Landgraviate. These, it was now affirmed, were a female appanage, and could only pass back to the Landgraves of X—— through a marriage with the female inheritrix. To reconcile all claims, therefore, on finding this bar in the way, the Emperor had resolved to promote a marriage for Maximilian with Paulina, who stood equally related to the Imperial house and to that of her lover. In this view he had despatched Paulina to Klosterheim, with proper documents to support the claims of both

parties. Of these documents she had been robbed at Waldenhausen; and the very letter which was designed to introduce Maximilian as "the child and sole representative of the late murdered Landgrave," falling in this surreptitious way into the usurper's hand, had naturally misdirected his attacks to the person of Paulina.

For the rest, as regarded the mysterious movements of The Masque, these were easily explained. Fear, and the exaggerations of fear, had done one half the work to his hands—by preparing people to fall easy dupes to the plans laid, and by increasing the romantic wonders of his achievements. Co-operation also on the part of the very students and others who stood forward as the night watch for detecting him, had served The Masque no less powerfully. The appearances of deadly struggles had been arranged artificially to countenance the plot and to aid the terror. Finally, the secret passages which communicated between the forest and the chapel of St. Agnes (passages of which many were actually applied to that very use in the Thirty Years' War) had been unreservedly placed at their disposal by the Lady Abbess, an early friend of the unhappy Landgravine, who sympathized deeply with that lady's unmerited sufferings.

One other explanation followed, communicated in a letter from Maximilian to the Legate; this related to the murder of the old seneschal, a matter in which the young Prince took some blame to himself—as having unintentionally drawn upon that excellent servant his unhappy fate. "The seneschal," said the writer, "was the faithful friend of my family, and knew the whole course of its misfortunes. He continued his abode at the *schloss* to serve my interest; and in some measure I may fear that I drew upon him his fate. Traversing late one evening a suite of rooms, which his assistance and my own mysterious disguise laid open to my passage at all hours, I came suddenly upon the Prince's retirement. He pursued me, but with hesitation. Some check I gave to his motions by halting before a portrait of my unhappy father, and emphatically pointing his attention to it. Conscience, I well knew, would supply a commentary to my act. I produced the impression which I had anticipated, but not so strongly as to stop his pursuit. My course

necessarily drew him into the seneschal's room. The old man was sleeping ; and this accident threw into the Prince's hands a paper, which, I have reason to think, shed some considerable light upon my own pretensions, and, in fact, first made my enemy acquainted with my existence and my claims. Meantime, the seneschal had secured the Prince's vengeance upon himself. He was now known as a faithful agent in my service. That fact signed his death-warrant. There is a window in a gallery which commands the interior of the seneschal's room. On the evening of the last *fête*, waiting there for an opportunity of speaking securely with this faithful servant, I heard a deep groan, and then another, and another ; I raised myself, and with an ejaculation of horror, looked down upon the murderer—then surveying his victim with hellish triumph. My loud exclamation drew the murderer's eye upwards : under the pangs of an agitated conscience, I have reason to think that he took me for my unhappy father, who perished at my age, and is said to have resembled me closely. Who that murderer was, I need not say more directly. He fled with the terror of one who flies from an apparition. Taking a lesson from this incident, on that same night, by the very same sudden revelation of what passed, no doubt, for my father's countenance, aided by my mysterious character, and the proof I had announced to him immediately before of my acquaintance with the secret of the seneschal's murder—in this and no other way it was that I produced that powerful impression upon the Prince which terminated the festivities of that evening, and which all Klosterheim witnessed. If not, it is for the Prince to explain in what other way I did or could affect him so powerfully."

This explanation of the else unaccountable horror manifested by the ex-Landgrave on the sudden exposure of The Masque's features, received a remarkable confirmation from the confession of the miserable assassin at Waldenhausen. This man's illness had been first brought on by the sudden shock of a situation pretty nearly the same, acting on a conscience more disturbed and a more superstitious mind. In the very act of attempting to assassinate or rob Maximilian, he had been suddenly dragged by that Prince into a dazzling

light ; and this, settling full upon features which too vividly recalled to the murderer's recollection the last unhappy Landgrave at the very same period of blooming manhood, and in his own favourite hunting palace, not far from which the murder had been perpetrated, naturally enough had for a time unsettled the guilty man's understanding, and, terminating in a nervous fever, had at length produced his penitential death.

A death, happily of the same character, soon overtook the deposed Landgrave. He was laid by the side of his daughter, whose memory, as much even as his own penitence, availed to gather round his final resting-place the forgiving thoughts even of those who had suffered most from his crimes. Klosterheim in the next age flourished greatly, being one of those cities which benefited by the Peace of Westphalia. Many changes took place in consequence, greatly affecting the architectural character of the town and its picturesque antiquities ; but, amidst all revolutions of this nature, the secret passages still survive,—and to this day are shown occasionally to strangers of rank and consideration,—by which, more than by any other of the advantages at his disposal, The Masque of Klosterheim was enabled to replace himself in his patrimonial rights, and at the same time to liberate from a growing oppression his own compatriots and subjects.

THE HOUSEHOLD WRECK[1]

"To be weak," we need not the great Archangel's voice to tell us, "*is to be miserable.*" All weakness is suffering and humiliation, no matter for its mode or its subject. Beyond all other weakness, therefore, and by a sad prerogative, as more miserable than what is most miserable in all, that capital weakness of man which regards the *tenure* of his enjoyments and his power to protect, even for a moment, the crown of flowers—flowers, at the best, how frail and few!—which sometimes settles upon his haughty brow. There is no end, there never will be an end, of the lamentations which ascend from Earth and the rebellious heart of her children upon this huge opprobrium of human pride—the everlasting mutabilities of all which man can grasp by his power or by his aspirations, the fragility of all which he inherits, and the hollowness visible amid the very raptures of enjoyment to every eye which looks for a moment underneath the draperies of the shadowy *present*, the hollowness, the blank treachery of hollowness, upon which all the pomps and vanities of life ultimately repose. This trite but unwearying theme, this impassioned commonplace of humanity, is the subject in every age of variation without end, from the

[1] This story appeared complete as one long article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January 1838. It was not reprinted by De Quincey himself in his Collective Edition; and only the first few pages of it were reprinted in Messrs. Black's sixteen-volume reissue of that edition,—these in the form of a separate little article in vol. xvi with the title "The Juggernaut of Social Life." In the American Collective Edition of De Quincey, however, the story is given entire.—M.

poet, the rhetorician, the fabulist, the moralist, the divine, and the philosopher. All, amidst the sad vanity of their sighs and groans, labour to put on record and to establish this monotonous complaint, which needs not other record or evidence than those very sighs and groans. What is life? Darkness and formless vacancy for a beginning, or something beyond all beginning; then next a dim lotos of human consciousness, finding itself afloat upon the bosom of waters without a shore; then a few sunny smiles and many tears; a little love and infinite strife; whisperings from paradise and fierce mockeries from the anarchy of chaos; dust and ashes, and once more darkness circling round, as if from the beginning, and in this way rounding or making an island of our fantastic existence: *that* is human life, *that* the inevitable amount of man's laughter and his tears—of what he suffers and he does—of his motions this way and that way, to the right or to the left, backwards or forwards—of all his seeming realities and all his absolute negations—his shadowy pomps and his pompous shadows—of whatsoever he thinks, finds, makes or mars, creates or animates, loves, hates, or in dread hope anticipates. So it is, so it has been, so it will be for ever and ever.

Yet in the lowest deep there still yawns a lower deep; and in the vast halls of man's frailty there are separate and more gloomy chambers of a frailty more exquisite and consummate. We account it frailty that threescore years and ten make the upshot of man's pleasurable existence, and that far before that time is reached his beauty and his power have fallen among weeds and forgetfulness; but there is a frailty by comparison with which this ordinary flux of the human race seems to have a vast duration. Cases there are, and those not rare, in which a single week, a day, an hour, sweeps away all vestiges and landmarks of a memorable felicity; in which the ruin travels faster than the flying showers upon the mountain side, faster "than a musician scatters sounds"; in which "it was" and "it is not" are words of the self-same tongue in the self-same minute; in which the sun that at noon beheld all sound and prosperous long before its setting hour looks out upon a total wreck, and sometimes upon the total abolition of any fugitive

memorial that there ever had been a vessel to be wrecked or a wreck to be obliterated.

These cases, though here spoken of rhetorically, are of daily occurrence ; and, though they may seem few by comparison with the infinite millions of the species, they are many indeed if they be reckoned absolutely for themselves ; and, throughout the limits of a whole nation, not a day passes over us but many families are robbed of their heads, or even swallowed up in ruin themselves, or their course turned out of the sunny beams into a dark wilderness. Shipwrecks and nightly conflagrations are sometimes, and especially among some nations, wholesale calamities ; battles yet more so. Earthquakes, the famine, the pestilence, though rarer, are visitations yet wider in their desolation. Sickness and commercial ill luck, if narrower, are more frequent scourges. And most of all, or with most darkness in its train, comes the sickness of the brain,—lunacy,—which, visiting nearly one thousand in every million, must, in every populous nation, make many ruins in each particular day. "Babylon in ruins," says a great author, "is not so sad a sight as a human soul overthrown by lunacy." But there is a sadder even than *that* ; the sight of a family ruin wrought by crime is even more appalling. Forgery, breaches of trust, embezzlement of private or public funds (a crime sadly on the increase since the example of Fauntleroy and the suggestion of its great feasibility first made by him),—these enormities, followed too often, and countersigned for their final result to the future happiness of families, by the appalling catastrophe of suicide, must naturally, in every wealthy nation, or wherever property and the modes of property are much developed, constitute the vast majority of all that come under the review of public justice. Any of these is sufficient to make shipwreck of all peace and comfort for a family ; and often indeed it happens that the desolation is accomplished within the course of one revolving sun ; often the whole dire catastrophe, together with its total consequences, is both accomplished and made known to those whom it chiefly concerns within one and the same hour. The mighty Juggernaut of social life, moving onwards with its everlasting thunders, pauses not for a moment to spare, to pity, to look

aside, but rushes forward for ever, impassive as the marble in the quarry, caring not for whom it destroys, for the how many, or for the results direct and indirect, whether many or few. The increasing grandeur and magnitude of the social system, the more it multiplies and extends its victims, the more it conceals them, and for the very same reason; just as in the Roman amphitheatres, when they grew to the magnitude of mighty cities (in some instances accommodating four hundred thousand spectators, in many a fifth part of that amount), births and deaths became ordinary events, which in a small modern theatre are rare and memorable; and, exactly as these prodigious accidents multiplied, *pari passu* they were disregarded and easily concealed; for curiosity was no longer excited; the sensation attached to them was little or none.

From these terrific tragedies, which, like monsoons or tornadoes, accomplish the work of years in an hour, not merely an impressive lesson is derived,—sometimes, perhaps, a warning,—but also (and this is of universal application) some consolation. Whatever may have been the misfortunes or the sorrows of a man's life, he is still privileged to regard himself and his friends as amongst the fortunate by comparison, in so far as he has escaped these wholesale storms, either as an actor in producing them, or a contributor to their violence, or even more innocently (though oftentimes not less miserably) as a participator in the instant ruin or in the long arrears of suffering which they entail.

The following story falls within the class of hasty tragedies and sudden desolations here described. The reader is assured that every incident is strictly true: nothing in that respect has been altered, nor indeed anywhere except in the conversations, of which, though the results and general outline are known, the separate details have necessarily been lost under the agitating circumstances which produced them. It has been judged right and delicate to conceal the name of the great city, and therefore of the nation, in which these events occurred,—chiefly out of consideration for the descendants of one person concerned in the narrative. Otherwise it might not have been requisite; for it is proper to mention that every person directly a party to the case has been long

laid in the grave,—all of them, with one solitary exception, upwards of fifty years.

It was early spring in the year 17—. The day was the 6th of April ; and the weather, which had been of a wintry fierceness for the preceding six or seven weeks,—cold, indeed, beyond anything known for many years, gloomy forever, and broken by continual storms,—was now, by a Swedish transformation, all at once bright, genial, heavenly. So sudden and so early a prelusion of summer, it was generally feared, could not last. But that only made everybody the more eager to lose no hour of an enjoyment that might prove so fleeting. It seemed as if the whole population of the place—a population among the most numerous in Christendom—had been composed of hybernating animals suddenly awakened by the balmy sunshine from their long winter's torpor. Through every hour of the golden morning the streets were resonant with female parties of young and old, the timid and the bold,—nay, even of the most delicate valetudinarians, now first tempted to lay aside their wintry clothing, together with their fireside habits ; whilst the whole rural environs of our vast city, the woodlands and the interminable meadows, began daily to reëcho the glad voices of the young and jovial, awaking once again, like the birds, and the flowers, and universal Nature, to the luxurious happiness of this most delightful season.

Happiness do I say ? Yes, happiness—happiness to me above all others : for I also in those days was among the young and the gay ; I was healthy ; I was strong ; I was prosperous in a worldly sense ; I owed no man a shilling, feared no man's face, shunned no man's presence ; I held a respectable station in society ; I was myself, let me venture to say it, respected generally for my personal qualities, apart from any advantages I might draw from fortune or inheritance ; I had reason to think myself popular amongst the very slender circle of my acquaintance ; and, finally, which perhaps was the crowning grace to all these elements of happiness, I suffered not from the presence of *ennui*, nor ever feared to suffer ; for my temperament was constitutionally ardent. I had a powerful animal sensibility, and I knew

the one great secret for maintaining its equipoise: viz. by powerful daily exercise. And thus I lived in the light and presence, or, if I should not be suspected of seeking rhetorical expressions, I would say, in one eternal solstice of unclouded hope.

These, you will say, were blessings; these were golden elements of felicity. They were so; and yet, with the single exception of my healthy frame and fine animal organization, I feel that I have mentioned hitherto nothing but what by comparison might be thought of a vulgar quality. All the other advantages that I have enumerated, had they been yet wanting, might have been acquired; had they been forfeited, might have been reconquered; had they been even irretrievably lost, might, by a philosophic effort, have been dispensed with. Compensations might have been found for any of them—many equivalents, or, if not, consolations at least, for their absence. But now it remains to speak of other blessings too mighty to be valued, not merely as transcending in rank and dignity all other constituents of happiness, but for a reason far sadder than that,—because, once lost, they were incapable of restoration, and because not to be dispensed with,—blessings in which "either we must live or have no life,"—lights to the darkness of our paths and to the infirmity of our steps, which, once extinguished, nevermore on this side the gates of paradise can any man hope to see reillumined for himself. Amongst these I may mention an intellect, whether powerful or not in itself, at any rate most elaborately cultivated; and, to say the truth, I had little other business before me in this life than to pursue this lofty and delightful task. I may add, as a blessing not in the same *positive* sense as that which I have just mentioned, because not of a nature to contribute so hourly to the employment of the thoughts,—but yet in this sense equal, that the absence of either would have been an equal affliction: namely, a conscience void of all offence. It was little indeed that I, drawn by no necessities of situation into temptations of that nature, had done no injury to any man. That was fortunate; but I could not much value myself upon what was so much an accident of my situation. Something, however, I might pretend to beyond this *negative* merit: for I had

originally a benign nature ; and, as I advanced in years and thoughtfulness, the gratitude which possessed me for my own exceeding happiness led me to do that by principle and system which I had already done upon blind impulse ; and thus upon a double argument I was incapable of turning away from the prayer of the afflicted, whatever had been the sacrifice to myself. Hardly, perhaps, could it have been said in a sufficient sense at that time that I was a religious man ; yet undoubtedly I had all the foundations within me upon which religion might hereafter have grown. My heart overflowed with thankfulness to Providence ; I had a natural tone of unaffected piety ; and thus far, at least, I might have been called a religious man,—that in the simplicity of truth I could have exclaimed,—

"O Abner, I fear God ; and I fear none beside."

But wherefore seek to delay ascending by a natural climax to that final consummation and perfect crown of my felicity,—that almighty blessing which ratified their value to all the rest? Wherefore, O wherefore, do I shrink in miserable weakness from —— what? Is it from reviving, from calling up again into fierce and insufferable light, the images and features of a long-buried happiness? That would be a natural shrinking and a reasonable weakness. But how escape from reviving, whether I give it utterance or not, that which is forever vividly before me? What need to call into artificial light that which, whether sleeping or waking, by night or by day, for eight-and-thirty years has seemed by its miserable splendour to scorch my brain? Wherefore shrink from giving language, simple vocal utterance, to that burden of anguish which by so long an endurance has lost no atom of its weight, nor can gain any most surely by the loudest publication? Need there can be none, after this, to say that the priceless blessing which I have left to the final place in this ascending review was the companion of my life,—my darling and youthful wife. O dovelike woman! fated in an hour the most defenceless to meet with the ravening vulture ; lamb fallen amongst wolves ; trembling, fluttering fawn, whose path was inevitably to be crossed by the bloody tiger ; angel, whose most innocent heart fitted thee for too early a flight

from this impure planet ; if, indeed, it were a necessity that thou shouldst find no rest for thy footing except amidst thy native heavens,—if, indeed, to leave what was not worthy of thee were a destiny not to be evaded, a summons not to be put by :—yet why, why, again and again I demand,—why was it also necessary that this thy departure, so full of woe to me, should also to thyself be heralded by the pangs of martyrdom ? Sainted love, if, like the ancient children of the Hebrews, like Meshach and Abednego, thou wert called by divine command, whilst yet almost a child, to walk, and to walk alone, through the fiery furnace, wherefore then couldst not thou, like that Meshach and that Abednego, walk unsinged by the dreadful torment and come forth unharmed ? Why, if the sacrifice were to be total, was it necessary to reach it by so dire a struggle ? And, if the cup, the bitter cup, of final separation from those that were the light of thy eyes and the pulse of thy heart might not be put aside, yet wherefore was it that thou mightest not drink it up in the natural peace which belongs to a sinless heart ?

But these are murmurings, you will say, rebellious murmurings, against the proclamations of God. Not so. I have long since submitted myself, resigned myself, nay, even reconciled myself perhaps, to the great wreck of my life, in so far as it was the will of God, and according to the weakness of my imperfect nature. But my wrath still rises, like a towering flame, against all the earthly instruments of this ruin ; I am still at times as unresigned as ever to this tragedy, in so far as it was the work of human malice. Vengeance, as a mission for *me*, as a task for *my* hands in particular, is no longer possible ; the thunderbolts of retribution have been long since launched by other hands ; and yet still it happens that at times I do, I must, I shall perhaps to the hour of death, rise in maniac fury, and seek, in the very impotence of vindictive madness, groping as it were in blindness of heart, for that tiger from hell-gates that tore away my darling from my heart. Let me pause, and interrupt this painful strain, to say a word or two upon what she was, and how far worthy of a love more honourable to her (that was possible) and deeper (but that was not possible) than mine. When first I saw her, she—my Agnes—was merely a

child, not much (if anything) above sixteen; but, as in perfect womanhood she retained a most childlike expression of countenance, so even then in absolute childhood she put forward the blossoms and the dignity of a woman. Never yet did my eye light upon creature that was born of woman, nor could it enter my heart to conceive one, possessing a figure more matchless in its proportions, more statuesque, and more deliberately and advisedly to be characterized by no adequate word but the word *magnificent* (a word too often and lightly abused). In reality, speaking of women, I have seen many beautiful figures, but hardly one except Agnes that could, without hyperbole, be styled truly and memorably magnificent. Though in the first order of tall women, yet, being full in person and with a symmetry that was absolutely faultless, she seemed to the random sight as little above the ordinary height. Possibly from the dignity of her person, assisted by the dignity of her movements, a stranger would have been disposed to call her at a distance a woman of *commanding* presence, but never after he had approached near enough to behold her face. Every thought of artifice, of practised effect, or of haughty pretension fled before the childlike innocence, the sweet feminine timidity, and the more than cherub loveliness of that countenance, which yet in its lineaments was noble, whilst its expression was purely gentle and confiding. A shade of pensiveness there was about her; but *that* was in her manners, scarcely ever in her features; and the exquisite fairness of her complexion, enriched by the very sweetest and most delicate bloom that ever I have beheld, should rather have allied it to a tone of cheerfulness. Looking at this noble creature, as I first looked at her when yet upon the early threshold of womanhood,—

> "With household motions light and free,
> And steps of virgin liberty,"—

you might have supposed her some Hebe or young Aurora of the dawn. When you saw only her superb figure and its promise of womanly development, with the measured dignity of her step, you might for a moment have fancied her some imperial Medea of the Athenian stage, some Volumnia from Rome,—

> "Or ruling bandit's wife amidst the Grecian isles."

But catch one glance from her angelic countenance, and then, combining the face and the person, you would have dismissed all such fancies, and have pronounced her a Pandora or an Eve, expressly accomplished and held forth by Nature as an exemplary model or ideal pattern for the future female sex—

> "A perfect woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, to command;
> And yet a spirit, too, and bright
> With something of an angel light."

To this superb young woman, such as I have here sketched her, I surrendered my heart forever almost from my first opportunity of seeing her; for so natural and without disguise was her character and so winning the simplicity of her manners, due in part to her own native dignity of mind and in part to the deep solitude in which she had been reared, that little penetration was required to put me in possession of all her thoughts, and to win her love,—not very much more than to let her see, as see she could not avoid, in connexion with that chivalrous homage which at any rate was due to her sex and her sexual perfections, a love for herself on my part which was in its nature as exalted a passion and as profoundly rooted as any merely human affection can ever yet have been.

On the seventeenth birthday of Agnes we were married. O calendar of everlasting months,—months that, like the mighty rivers, shall flow on forever, immortal as thou, Nile, or Danube, Euphrates, or St. Lawrence,—and ye, summer and winter, day and night, wherefore do you bring round continually your signs, and seasons, and revolving hours, that still point and barb the anguish of local recollections, telling me of this and that celestial morning that never shall return, and of too blessed expectations, travelling like yourselves through a heavenly zodiac of changes, till at once and forever they sank into the grave? Often do I think of seeking for some quiet cell, either in the tropics or in arctic latitudes, where the changes of the year, and the external signs corresponding to them, express themselves by no features like those in which the same seasons are invested under our temperate climes; so that, if knowing, we cannot at least feel the

identity of their revolutions. We were married, I have said, on the birthday—the seventeenth birthday—of Agnes ; and pretty nearly on her eighteenth it was that she placed me at the summit of my happiness, whilst for herself she thus completed the circle of her relations to this life's duties, by presenting me with a son. Of this child, knowing how wearisome to strangers is the fond exultation of parents, I shall simply say that he inherited his mother's beauty—the same touching loveliness and innocence of expression, the same chiselled nose, mouth, and chin, the same exquisite auburn hair. In many other features, not of person merely, but also of mind and manners, as they gradually began to open before me, this child deepened my love to him by recalling the image of his mother ; and what other image was there that I so much wished to keep before me, whether waking or asleep ? At the time to which I am now coming but too rapidly, this child, still our only one, and unusually premature, was within four months of completing his third year ; consequently Agnes was at that time in her twenty-first year ; and I may here add, with respect to myself, that I was in my twenty-sixth.

But, before I come to that period of woe, let me say one word on the temper of mind which so fluent and serene a current of prosperity may be thought to have generated. Too common a course I know it is when the stream of life flows with absolute tranquillity, and ruffled by no menace of a breeze, the azure overhead never dimmed by a passing cloud, that in such circumstances the blood stagnates ; life, from excess and plethora of sweets, becomes insipid ; the spirit of action droops ; and it is oftentimes found at such seasons that slight annoyances and molestations, or even misfortunes in a lower key, are not wholly undesirable as means of stimulating the lazy energies, and disturbing a slumber which is, or soon will be, morbid in its character. I have known myself cases not a few where, by the very nicest gradations and by steps too silent and insensible for daily notice, the utmost harmony and reciprocal love had shaded down into fretfulness and petulance, purely from too easy a life, and because all nobler agitations that might have ruffled the sensations occasionally, and all distresses even on the

narrowest scale that might have reawakened the solicitudes of love, by opening necessities for sympathy, for counsel, or for mutual aid, had been shut out by foresight too elaborate or by prosperity too cloying. But all this, had it otherwise been possible with my particular mind and at my early age, was utterly precluded by one remarkable peculiarity in my temper. Whether it were that I derived from Nature some jealousy and suspicion of all happiness which seems too perfect and unalloyed,—(a spirit of restless distrust, which in ancient times often led men to throw valuable gems into the sea, in the hope of thus propitiating the dire deity of misfortune by voluntarily breaking the fearful chain of prosperity, and led some of them to weep and groan when the gems thus sacrificed were afterwards brought back to their hand by simple fishermen, who had recovered them in the intestines of fishes—a portentous omen, which was interpreted into a sorrowful indication that the deity thus answered the propitiatory appeal, and made solemn proclamation that he had rejected it),—whether, I say, it were this spirit of jealousy awaked in me by too steady and too profound a felicity; or whether it were that great overthrows and calamities have some mysterious power to send forward a dim misgiving of their advancing footsteps, and really and indeed

"That in to-day already walks to-morrow";

or whether it were partly, as I have already put the case in my first supposition, a natural instinct of distrust, but irritated and enlivened by a particular shock of superstitious alarm: which, or whether any, of these causes it were that kept me apprehensive and on the watch for disastrous change, I will not here undertake to determine. Too certain it is that I was so. I never ridded myself of an overmastering and brooding sense, shadowy and vague, a dim abiding feeling (that sometimes was and sometimes was not exalted into a conscious presentiment) of some great calamity travelling towards me, not perhaps immediately impending, perhaps even at a great distance, but already dating from some secret hour—already in motion upon some remote line of approach. This feeling I could not assuage by sharing it with Agnes. No motive could be strong enough for persuad-

ing me to communicate so gloomy a thought with one who, considering her extreme healthiness, was but too remarkably prone to pensive, if not to sorrowful, contemplations. And thus the obligation which I felt to silence and reserve strengthened the morbid impression I had received ; whilst the remarkable incident I had adverted to served powerfully to rivet the superstitious chain which was continually gathering round me. The incident was this ; and, before I repeat it, let me pledge my word of honour that I report to you the bare facts of the case, without exaggeration, and in the simplicity of truth. There was at that time resident in the great city which is the scene of my narrative a woman from some part of Hungary, who pretended to the gift of looking into futurity. She had made herself known advantageously in several of the greatest cities of Europe under the designation of the Hungarian Prophetess, and very extraordinary instances were cited amongst the highest circles of her success in the art which she professed. So ample were the pecuniary tributes which she levied upon the hopes, and the fears, or the simple curiosity of the aristocracy, that she was thus able to display not unfrequently a disinterestedness and a generosity, which seemed native to her disposition, amongst the humbler classes of her applicants; for she rejected no addresses that were made to her, provided only they were not expressed in levity or scorn, but with sincerity and in a spirit of confiding respect. It happened on one occasion, when a nursery servant of ours was waiting in her anteroom for the purpose of taking her turn in consulting the prophetess professionally, that she had witnessed a scene of consternation and unaffected maternal grief in this Hungarian lady upon the sudden seizure of her son, a child of four or five years old, by a spasmodic inflammation of the throat (since called croup) peculiar to children, and in those days not very well understood by medical men. The poor Hungarian, who had lived chiefly in warm, or at least not damp, climates, and had never so much as heard of this complaint, was almost wild with alarm at the rapid increase of the symptoms which attend the paroxysms, and especially of that loud and distressing sound which marks the impeded respiration. Great, therefore, was her joy and gratitude on finding

from our servant that she had herself been in attendance more than once upon cases of the same nature, but very much more violent; and that, consequently, she was well qualified to suggest and to superintend all the measures of instant necessity, such as the hot bath, the peculiar medicines, &c., which are almost sure of success when applied in an early stage. Staying to give her assistance until a considerable improvement had taken place in the child, our servant then hurried home to her mistress. Agnes, it may be imagined, despatched her back with such further and more precise directions as in a very short time availed to re-establish the child in convalescence. These practical services, and the messages of maternal sympathy repeatedly conveyed from Agnes, had completely won the heart of the grateful Hungarian; and she announced her intention of calling with her little boy, to make her personal acknowledgments for the kindness which had been shown to her. She did so; and we were as much impressed by the sultana-like style of her Oriental beauty, as she, on her part, was touched and captivated by the youthful loveliness of my angelic wife. After sitting for above an hour, during which time she talked with a simplicity and good feeling that struck us as remarkable in a person professing an art usually connected with so much of conscious fraud, she rose to take her leave. I must mention that she had previously had our little boy sitting on her knee, and had, at intervals, thrown a hasty glance upon the palms of his hands. On parting, Agnes, with her usual frankness, held out her hand. The Hungarian took it with an air of sad solemnity, pressed it fervently, and said, "Lady, it is my part in this life to look behind the curtain of fate; and oftentimes I see such sights in futurity—some near, some far off—as willingly I would *not* see. For you, young and charming lady, looking like that angel which you are, no destiny can be equal to your deserts. Yet sometimes, true it is, God sees not as man sees; and he ordains, after his unfathomable counsels, to the heavenly-minded a portion in heaven, and to the children whom he loves a rest and a haven not built with hands. Something that I have seen dimly warns me to look no farther. Yet, if you desire it, I will do my office, and I will read for you with truth the lines of fate

as they are written upon your hands." Agnes was a little startled, or even shocked, by this solemn address; but in a minute or so, a mixed feeling—one half of which was curiosity, and the other half a lighthearted mockery of her own mysterious awe in the presence of what she had been taught to view as either fraud or insanity—prompted her playfully to insist upon the fullest application of the Hungarian's art to her own case; nay, she would have the hands of our little Francis read and interpreted as well as her own; and she desired to hear the full professional judgment delivered without suppression or softening of its harshest awards. She laughed whilst she said all this, but she also trembled a little. The Hungarian first took the hand of our young child, and perused it with a long and steady scrutiny. She said nothing, but sighed heavily, as she resigned it. She then took the hand of Agnes, looked bewildered and aghast, then gazed piteously from Agnes to her child, and at last, bursting into tears, began to move steadily out of the room. I followed her hastily, and remonstrated upon this conduct by pointing her attention to the obvious truth—that these mysterious suppressions and insinuations, which left all shadowy and indistinct, were far more alarming than the most definite denunciations. Her answer yet rings in my ear: "Why should I make myself odious to you and to your innocent wife? Messenger of evil I am, and have been to many; but evil I will not prophesy to her. Watch and pray. Much may be done by effectual prayer. Human means, fleshly arms, are vain. There is an enemy in the house of life" (here she quitted her palmistry for the language of astrology); "there is a frightful danger at hand, both for your wife and your child. Already on that dark ocean over which we are all sailing I can see dimly the point at which the enemy's course shall cross your wife's. There is but little interval remaining—not many hours. All is finished; all is accomplished; and already he is almost up with the darlings of your heart. Be vigilant, be vigilant; and yet look not to yourself, but to Heaven, for deliverance."

This woman was not an impostor; she spoke and uttered her oracles under a wild sense of possession by some superior being, and of mystic compulsion to say what she would have

willingly left unsaid ; and never yet, before or since, have I seen the light of sadness settle with so solemn an expression into human eyes as when she dropped my wife's hand and refused to deliver that burden of prophetic woe with which she believed herself to be inspired.

The prophetess departed ; and what mood of mind did she leave behind her in Agnes and myself ? Naturally there was a little drooping of spirits at first ; the solemnity and the heartfelt sincerity of fear and grief which marked her demeanour made it impossible, at the moment when we were just fresh from their natural influences, that we should recoil into our ordinary spirits. But, with the inevitable elasticity of youth and youthful gaiety, we soon did so. We could not attempt to persuade ourselves that there had been any conscious fraud or any attempt at scenical effect in the Hungarian's conduct. She had no motive for deceiving us ; she had refused all offerings of money ; and her whole visit had evidently been made under an overflow of the most grateful feelings for the attentions shown to her child. We acquitted her, therefore, of sinister intentions ; and with our feelings of jealousy, feelings in which we had been educated, towards everything that tended to superstition, we soon agreed to think her some gentle maniac or sad enthusiast, suffering under some form of morbid melancholy. Forty-eight hours, with two nights' sleep, sufficed to restore the wonted equilibrium of our spirits ; and that interval brought us onwards to the 6th of April—the day on which, as I have already said, my story properly commences.

On that day, on that lovely 6th of April, such as I have described it,—that 6th of April, about nine o'clock in the morning,—we were seated at breakfast near the open window—we, that is, Agnes, myself, and little Francis. The freshness of morning spirits rested upon us ; the golden light of the morning sun illuminated the room ; incense was floating through the air from the gorgeous flowers within and without the house. There in youthful happiness we sat gathered together, a family of love ; and there we never sat again. Never again were we three gathered together, nor ever shall be, so long as the sun and its golden light, the morning and the evening, the earth and its flowers, endure.

Often have I occupied myself in recalling every circumstance the most trivial of this the final morning of what merits to be called my life. Eleven o'clock, I remember, was striking when Agnes came into my study and said that she would go into the city (for we lived in a quite rural suburb), that she would execute some trifling commissions which she had received from a friend in the country, and would be at home again between one and two for a stroll which we had agreed to take in the neighbouring meadows. About twenty minutes after this she again came into my study, dressed for going abroad; for such was my admiration of her that I had a fancy—fancy it must have been, and yet still I felt it to be real—that under every change she looked best. If she put on a shawl, then a shawl became the most feminine of ornaments; if she laid aside her shawl and her bonnet, then how nymphlike she seemed in her undisguised and unadorned beauty! Full dress seemed for the time to be best, as bringing forward into relief the splendour of her person and allowing the exposure of her arms. A simple morning dress, again, seemed better still, as fitted to call out the childlike innocence of her face by confining the attention to that. But all these are feelings of fond and blind affection, hanging with rapture over the object of something too like idolatry. God knows, if that be a sin, I was but too profound a sinner; yet sin it never was, sin it could not be, to adore a beauty such as thine, my Agnes. Neither was it her beauty by itself, and that only, which I sought at such times to admire: there was a peculiar sort of double relation in which she stood at moments of pleasurable expectation and excitement, since our little Francis had become of an age to join our party, which made some aspects of her character trebly interesting. She was a wife, and wife to one whom she looked up to as her superior in understanding and in knowledge of the world; whom, therefore, she leaned to for protection. On the other hand, she was also a mother. Whilst, therefore, to her child she supported the matronly part of guide and the air of an experienced person, to me she wore, ingenuously and without disguise, the part of a child herself, with all the giddy hopes and unchastised imaginings of that buoyant age. This double character, one aspect of

which looks towards her husband and one to her children, sits most gracefully upon many a young wife whose heart is pure and innocent; and the collision between the two separate parts, imposed by duty on the one hand, by extreme youth on the other,—the one telling her that she is a responsible head of a family and the depositary of her husband's honour in its tenderest and most vital interests; the other telling her, through the liveliest language of animal sensibility and through the very pulses of her blood, that she is herself a child,—this collision gives an inexpressible charm to the whole demeanour of many a young married woman, making her other fascinations more touching to her husband and deepening the admiration she excites; and the more so, as it is a collision which cannot exist except among the very innocent. Years, at any rate, will irresistibly remove this peculiar charm, and gradually replace it by the graces of the matronly character. But in Agnes this change had not yet been effected, partly from nature, and partly from the extreme seclusion of her life. Hitherto she still retained the unaffected expression of her childlike nature; and so lovely in my eyes was this perfect exhibition of natural feminine character that she rarely or never went out alone upon any little errand to town which might require her to rely upon her own good sense and courage that she did not previously come to exhibit herself before me. Partly this was desired by me in that lover-like feeling of admiration, already explained, which leads one to court the sight of a beloved object under every change of dress and under all effects of novelty. Partly it was the interest I took in that exhibition of sweet timidity and almost childish apprehensiveness, half disguised or imperfectly acknowledged by herself, which (in the way I have just explained) so touchingly contrasted with (and for that very reason so touchingly drew forth) her matronly character.

But I hear some objector say at this point, Ought not this very timidity, founded (as in part at least it was) upon inexperience and conscious inability to face the dangers of the world, to have suggested reasons for not leaving her to her own protection? And does it not argue, on my part, an arrogant or too blind a confidence in the durability of my

happiness, as though charmed against assaults and liable to no shocks of sudden revolution? I reply that, from the very constitution of society and the tone of manners in the city which we inhabited, there seemed to be a moral impossibility that any dangers of consequence should meet her in the course of those brief absences from my protection which only were possible; that even to herself any dangers of a nature to be anticipated under the known circumstances of the case seemed almost imaginary; that even *she* acknowledged a propriety in being trained, by slight and brief separations from my guardianship, to face more boldly those cases of longer separation and of more absolute consignment to her own resources which circumstances might arise to create necessarily and perhaps abruptly. And it is evident that, had she been the wife of any man engaged in the duties of a profession, she might have been summoned from the very first, and without the possibility of any such gradual training, to the necessity of relying almost singly upon her own courage and discretion. For the other question, whether I did not depend too blindly and presumptuously upon my good luck in not at least affording her my protection so long as nothing occurred to make it impossible, I may reply, most truly, that all my feelings ran naturally in the very opposite channel. So far from confiding too much in my luck, in the present instance I was engaged in a task of writing upon some points of business which could not admit of further delay; but now, and at all times, I had a secret aversion to seeing so gentle a creature thrown even for an hour upon her own resources, though in situations which scarcely seemed to admit of any occasion for taxing these resources; and often I have felt anger towards myself for what appeared to be an irrational or effeminate timidity, and have struggled with my own mind upon occasions like the present, when I knew that I could not have acknowledged my tremors to a friend without something like shame and a fear to excite his ridicule. No; if in anything I ran into excess, it was in this very point of anxiety as to all that regarded my wife's security. Her good sense, her prudence, her courage (for courage she had in the midst of her timidity), her dignity of manner, the more impressive from the childlike character of her counte-

nance,—all should have combined to reassure me; and yet they did not. I was still anxious for her safety to an irrational extent; and, to sum up the whole in a most weighty line of Shakspere, I lived under the constant presence of a feeling which only that great observer of human nature (so far as I am aware) has ever noticed; viz. that merely the excess of my happiness made me jealous of its ability to last, and in that extent less capable of enjoying it; that, in fact, the prelibation of my tears, as a homage to its fragility, was drawn forth by my very sense that my felicity was too exquisite; or, in the words of the great master,—

"I wept to have [absolutely, by anticipation, shed tears in possessing] what I so feared to lose."

Thus end my explanations; and I now pursue my narrative. Agnes, as I have said, came into my room again before leaving the house. We conversed for five minutes; we parted; she went out, her last words being that she would return at half-past one o'clock; and not long after that time, if ever mimic bells—bells of rejoicing or bells of mourning—are heard in desert spaces of the air and (as some have said) in unreal worlds that mock our own, and repeat for ridicule the vain and unprofitable motions of man, then too surely about this hour began to toll the funeral knell of my earthly happiness: its final hour had sounded.

. . . . .

One o'clock had arrived. Fifteen minutes after I strolled into the garden, and began to look over the little garden gate in expectation of every moment descrying Agnes in the distance. Half an hour passed; and for ten minutes more I was tolerably quiet. From this time till half-past two I became constantly more agitated—*agitated*, perhaps, is too strong a word; but I was restless and anxious beyond what I should have chosen to acknowledge. Still I kept arguing, What is half an hour? What is an hour? A thousand things might have occurred to cause that delay, without needing to suppose an accident; or, if an accident, why not a very trifling one? She may have slightly hurt her foot; she may have slightly sprained her ankle. "O, doubtless," I exclaimed to myself, "it will be a mere trifle, or perhaps

nothing at all." But I remember that, even whilst I was saying this, I took my hat and walked with nervous haste into the little quiet lane upon which our garden gate opened. The lane led by a few turnings, and after a course of about five hundred yards, into a broad high-road, which even at that day had begun to assume the character of a street, and allowed an unobstructed range of view in the direction of the city for at least a mile. Here I stationed myself; for the air was so clear that I could distinguish dress and figure to a much greater distance than usual. Even on such a day, however, the remote distance was hazy and indistinct; and at any other season I should have been diverted with the various mistakes I made. From occasional combinations of colour, modified by light and shade, and of course powerfully assisted by the creative state of the eye under this nervous apprehensiveness, I continued to shape into images of Agnes forms without end, that upon nearer approach presented the most grotesque contrasts to her impressive appearance. But I had ceased even to comprehend the ludicrous; my agitation was now so overruling and engrossing that I lost even my intellectual sense of it; and now first I understood practically and feelingly the anguish of hope alternating with disappointment, as it may be supposed to act upon the poor shipwrecked seaman, alone and upon a desolate coast, straining his sight forever to the fickle element which has betrayed him, but which only can deliver him, and with his eyes still tracing in the far distance

"Ships, dim discovered, dropping from the clouds,"

which a brief interval of suspense still forever disperses into hollow pageants of air or vapour. One deception melted away only to be succeeded by another. Still I fancied that at last to a certainty I could descry the tall figure of Agnes, her gipsy hat, and even the peculiar elegance of her walk. Often I went so far as to laugh at myself, and even to tax my recent fears with unmanliness and effeminacy, on recollecting the audible throbbings of my heart and the nervous palpitations which had besieged me; but these symptoms, whether effeminate or not, began to come back tumultuously under the gloomy doubts that succeeded almost before I had

uttered this self-reproach. Still I found myself mocked and deluded with false hopes ; yet still I renewed my quick walk and the intensity of my watch for that radiant form that was fated nevermore to be seen returning from the cruel city.

It was nearly half-past three, and therefore close upon two hours beyond the time fixed by Agnes for her return, when I became absolutely incapable of supporting the further torture of suspense ; and I suddenly took the resolution of returning home and concerting with my female servants some energetic measures, though *what* I could hardly say, on behalf of their mistress. On entering the garden gate I met our little child Francis, who unconsciously inflicted a pang upon me which he neither could have meditated nor have understood. I passed him at his play, perhaps even unaware of his presence ; but he recalled me to that perception by crying aloud that he had just seen his mamma.

"When ? Where ?" I asked convulsively.

"Upstairs, in her bedroom," was his instantaneous answer.

His manner was such as forbade me to suppose that he could be joking ; and, as it was barely possible (though, for reasons well known to me, in the highest degree improbable) that Agnes might have returned by a bypath which, leading through a dangerous and disreputable suburb, would not have coincided at any one point with the public road where I had been keeping my station, I sprang forward into the house, upstairs, and in rapid succession into every room where it was likely that she might be found. But everywhere there was a dead silence, disturbed only by myself ; for, in my growing confusion of thought, I believe that I rang the bell violently in every room I entered. No such summons, however, was needed ; for the servants, two of whom at the least were most faithful creatures and devotedly attached to their young mistress, stood ready of themselves to come and make inquiries of me as soon as they became aware of the alarming fact that I had returned without her.

Until this moment, though having some private reasons for surprise that she should have failed to come into the house for a minute or two at the hour prefixed, in order to make some promised domestic arrangements for the day, they

had taken it for granted that she must have met with me at some distance from home, and that either the extreme beauty of the day had beguiled her of all petty household recollections, or (as a conjecture more in harmony with past experiences) that my impatience and solicitations had persuaded her to lay aside her own plans for the moment, at the risk of some little domestic inconvenience. Now, however, in a single instant vanished *every* mode of accounting for their mistress's absence ; and the consternation of our looks communicated contagiously, by the most unerring of all languages, from each to the other, what thoughts were uppermost in our panic-stricken hearts. If to any person it should seem that our alarm was disproportioned to the occasion and not justified at least by anything as yet made known to us, let that person consider the weight due to the two following facts : first, that from the recency of our settlement in this neighbourhood, and from the extreme seclusion of my wife's previous life at a vast distance from the metropolis, she had positively no friends on her list of visitors who resided in this great capital ; secondly, and far above all beside, let him remember the awful denunciations, so unexpectedly tallying with this alarming and mysterious absence, of the Hungarian prophetess. These had been slighted, almost dismissed from our thoughts ; but now in sudden reaction they came back upon us with a frightful power to lacerate and to sting—the shadowy outline of a spiritual agency, such as that which could at all predict the events, combining in one mysterious effect with the shadowy outline of those very predictions. The power that could have predicted was as dim and as hard to grasp as was the precise nature of the evil that had been predicted.

An icy terror froze my blood at this moment when I looked at the significant glances, too easily understood by me, that were exchanged between the servants. My mouth had been for the last two hours growing more and more parched ; so that at present, from mere want of moisture, I could not separate my lips to speak. One of the women saw the vain efforts I was making, and hastily brought me a glass of water. With the first recovery of speech, I asked them what little Francis had meant by saying that he had seen his

mother in her bedroom. Their reply was that they were as much at a loss to discover his meaning as I was; that he had made the same assertion to them, and with so much earnestness that they had, all in succession, gone upstairs to look for her, and with the fullest expectation of finding her. This was a mystery which remained such to the very last. There was no doubt whatsoever that the child believed himself to have seen his mother; that he could not have seen her in her human bodily presence, there is as little doubt as there is, alas! that in this world he never *did* see her again. The poor child constantly adhered to his story, and with a circumstantiality far beyond all power of invention that could be presumed in an artless infant. Every attempt at puzzling him or entangling him in contradictions by means of cross-examination was but labour thrown away; though, indeed, it is true enough that for those attempts, as will soon be seen, there was but a brief interval allowed.

Not dwelling upon this subject at present, I turned to Hannah,—a woman who held the nominal office of cook in our little establishment, but whose real duties had been much more about her mistress's person,—and, with a searching look of appeal, I asked her whether, in this monent of trial, when (as she might see) I was not so perfectly master of myself as perhaps always to depend upon seeing what was best to be done, she would consent to accompany me into the city and take upon herself those obvious considerations of policy or prudence which might but too easily escape my mind, darkened and likely to be darkened, as to its power of discernment, by the hurricane of affliction now too probably at hand. She answered my appeal with the fervour I expected from what I had already known of her character. She was a woman of a strong, fiery, perhaps I might say of heroic mind, supported by a courage that was absolutely indomitable, and by a strength of bodily frame very unusual in a woman, and beyond the promise even of her person. She had suffered as deep a wrench in her own affections as a human being can suffer; she had lost her one sole child, a fairhaired boy of most striking beauty and interesting disposition, at the age of seventeen, and by the worst of all possible fates. He lived (as we did at that time) in a large

commercial city overflowing with profligacy and with temptations of every order. He had been led astray. Culpable he had been, but by very much the least culpable of the set into which accident had thrown him, as regarded acts and probable intentions; and, as regarded palliations from childish years, from total inexperience, or any other alleviating circumstances that could be urged, having everything to plead, and of all his accomplices the only one who had anything to plead. Interest, however, he had little or none; and, whilst some hoary villains of the party, who happened to be more powerfully befriended, were finally allowed to escape with a punishment little more than nominal, he and two others were selected as sacrifices to the offended laws. They suffered capitally. All three behaved well; but the poor boy, in particular, with a courage, a resignation, and a meekness so distinguished and beyond his years as to attract the admiration and the liveliest sympathy of the public universally. If strangers could feel in that way,—if the mere hardened executioner could be melted at the final scene,—it may be judged to what a fierce and terrific height would ascend the affliction of a doting mother, constitutionally too fervid in her affections. I have heard an official person declare that the spectacle of her desolation and frantic anguish was the most frightful thing he had ever witnessed, and so harrowing to the feelings that all who could by their rank venture upon such an irregularity absented themselves during the critical period from the office which corresponded with the government; for, as I have said, the affair took place in a large provincial city, at a great distance from the capital. All who knew this woman, or who were witnesses to the alteration which one fortnight had wrought in her person as well as her demeanour, fancied it impossible that she could continue to live; or that, if she did, it must be through the giving way of her reason. They proved, however, to be mistaken; or, at least, if (as some thought) her reason did suffer in some degree, this result showed itself in the inequality of her temper, in moody fits of abstraction, and the morbid energy of her manner at times under the absence of all adequate external excitement, rather than in any positive and apparent

hallucinations of thought. The charm which had mainly carried off the instant danger to her faculties was doubtless the intense sympathy which she met with. And in these offices of consolation my wife stood foremost; for—and that was fortunate—she had found herself able, without violence to her own sincerest opinions in the case, to offer precisely that form of sympathy which was most soothing to the angry irritation of the poor mother. Not only had she shown a *direct* interest in the boy, and not a mere interest of *reflection* from that which she took in the mother, and had expressed it by visits to his dungeon and by every sort of attention to his comforts which his case called for or the prison regulations allowed,—not only had she wept with the distracted woman as if for a brother of her own,—but, which went farther than all the rest in softening the mother's heart, she had loudly and indignantly proclaimed her belief in the boy's innocence, and, in the same tone, her sense of the crying injustice committed as to the selection of the victims and the proportion of the punishment awarded. Others, in the language of a great poet,—

"Had pitied *her*, and not her grief."

They had either not been able to see, or from carelessness had neglected to see, any peculiar wrong done to her in the matter which occasioned her grief, but had simply felt compassion for her as for one summoned, in a regular course of providential and human dispensation, to face an affliction heavy in itself, but not heavy from any special defect of equity. Consequently their very sympathy, being so much built upon the assumption that an only child had offended to the extent implied in his sentence, oftentimes clothed itself in expressions which she felt to be not consolations, but insults, and, in fact, so many justifications of those whom it relieved her overcharged heart to regard as the very worst of enemies. Agnes, on the other hand, took the very same view of the case as herself; and, though otherwise the gentlest of all gentle creatures, yet here, from the generous fervour of her reverence for justice and her abhorrence of oppression, she gave herself no trouble to moderate the energy of her language; nor did I, on my part, feeling

that substantially she was in the right, think it of importance to dispute about the exact degrees of the wrong done or the indignation due to it. In this way it happened naturally enough that at one and the same time, though little contemplating either of these results, Agnes had done a prodigious service to the poor desolate mother by breaking the force of her misery, as well as by arming the active agencies of indignation against the depressing ones of solitary grief, and for herself had won a most grateful and devoted friend, who would have gone through fire and water to serve her, and was thenceforwards most anxious for some opportunity to testify how deep had been her sense of the goodness shown to her by her benign young mistress, and how incapable of suffering abatement by time. It remains to add, which I have slightly noticed before, that this woman was of unusual personal strength: her bodily frame matched with her intellectual: and I notice this *now* with the more emphasis, because I am coming rapidly upon ground where it will be seen that this one qualification was of more summary importance to us—did us more "yeoman's service" at a crisis the most awful — than other qualities of greater name and pretension. *Hannah* was this woman's Christian name; and her name and her memory are to me amongst the most hallowed of my earthly recollections.

One of her two fellow-servants, known technically amongst us as the "parlour maid," was also, but not equally, attached to her mistress, and merely because her nature, less powerfully formed and endowed, did not allow her to entertain or to comprehend any service equally fervid of passion or of impassioned action. She, however, was good, affectionate, and worthy to be trusted. But a third there was, a nursery maid, and therefore more naturally and more immediately standing within the confidence of her mistress,—her I could not trust; her I suspected. But of that hereafter. Meantime, Hannah, she upon whom I leaned as upon a staff in all which respected her mistress, ran upstairs, after I had spoken and received her answer, in order hastily to dress and prepare herself for going out along with me to the city. I did not ask her to be quick in her movements—I knew there was no need; and, whilst she was absent, I

took up, in one of my fretful movements of nervousness, a book which was lying upon a side table. The book fell open of itself at a particular page, and in that, perhaps, there was nothing extraordinary ; for it was a little portable edition of *Paradise Lost*, and the page was one which I must naturally have turned to many a time ; for to Agnes I had read all the great masters of literature, especially those of modern times, so that few people knew the high classics more familiarly ; and, as to the passage in question, from its divine beauty I had read it aloud to her perhaps on fifty separate occasions. All this I mention to take away any appearance of a vulgar attempt to create omens ; but still, in the very act of confessing the simple truth, and thus weakening the marvellous character of the anecdote, I must notice it as a strange instance of the "*Sortes Miltonianæ*" that precisely at such a moment as this I should find thrown in my way, should feel tempted to take up, and should open, a volume containing such a passage as the following. And observe, moreover, that, although the volume, *once being taken up*, would naturally open where it had been most frequently read, there were, however, many passages which had been read *as* frequently, or more so. The particular passage upon which I opened at this moment was that most beautiful one in which the fatal morning separation is described between Adam and his bride—that separation so pregnant with woe, which eventually proved the occasion of the mortal transgression—the last scene between our first parents at which both were innocent and both were happy ; although the superior intellect already felt, and, in the slight altercation preceding this separation, had already expressed, a dim misgiving of some coming change. These are the words, and in depth of pathos they have rarely been approached :—

> " Oft he to her his charge of quick return
> Repeated ; she to him as oft engaged
> To be returned by noon amid the bower,
> And all things in best order to invite
> Noontide repast or afternoon's repose.
> O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve !
> Of thy presumed return, event perverse !
> Thou never from that hour in paradise
> Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose."

"*My* Eve!" I exclaimed, "partner in *my* paradise, where art thou? *Much failing* thou wilt not be found, nor *much deceived*; innocent in any case thou art; but, alas! too surely by this time *hapless*, and the victim of some diabolic wickedness." Thus I murmured to myself; thus I ejaculated; thus I apostrophized my Agnes. Then again came a stormier mood. I could not sit still; I could not stand in quiet; I threw the book from me with violence against the wall; I began to hurry backwards and forwards in a short, uneasy walk; when suddenly a sound, a step: it was the sound of the garden gate opening, followed by a hasty tread. Whose tread? Not for a moment could it be fancied the dread step which belonged to that daughter of the hills—my wife, my Agnes. No; it was the dull, massy tread of a man; and immediately there came a loud blow upon the door, and in the next moment, the bell having been found, a furious peal of ringing. O coward heart! not for a lease of immortality could I have gone forwards myself. My breath failed me; an interval came in which respiration seemed to be stifled, the blood to halt in its current; and then and there I recognized in myself the force and living truth of that scriptural description of a heart consciously beset by evil without escape: "Susannah *sighed*." Yes, a long, long sigh—a deep, deep sigh; that is the natural language by which the overcharged heart utters forth the woe that else would break it. I sighed —O how profoundly! But that did not give me power to move. Who will go to the door? I whispered audibly. Who is at the door? was the inaudible whisper of my heart. Then might be seen the characteristic differences of the three women. That one whom I suspected I heard raising an upper window to look out and reconnoitre. The affectionate Rachel, on the other hand, ran eagerly downstairs; but Hannah, half dressed, even her bosom exposed, passed her like a storm; and, before I heard any sound of opening a door, I saw from the spot where I stood the door already wide open, and a man in the costume of a policeman. All that he said I could not hear; but this I heard, that I was wanted at the police office, and had better come off without delay. He seemed then to get a glimpse of me and to make an effort towards coming nearer; but I slunk away, and left

to Hannah the task of drawing from him any circumstances which he might know. But apparently there was not much to tell; or rather, said I, there is too much—the *much* absorbs the *many*; some one mighty evil transcends and quells all particulars. At length the door was closed, and the man was gone. Hannah crept slowly along the passage and looked in hesitatingly. Her very movements and stealthy pace testified that she had heard nothing which, even by comparison, she could think good news. "Tell me not now, Hannah," I said; "wait till we are in the open air." She went upstairs again. How short seemed the time till she descended! How I longed for further respite! "Hannah!" I said at length when we were fairly moving upon the road, "Hannah! I am too sure you have nothing good to tell. But now tell me the worst, and let that be in the fewest words possible."

"Sir," she said, "we had better wait until we reach the office; for really I could not understand the man. He says that my mistress is detained upon some charge; but *what*, I could not at all make out. He was a man that knew something of you, sir, I believe; and he wished to be civil, and kept saying, 'O, I dare say it will turn out nothing at all; many such charges are made idly and carelessly, and some maliciously.' 'But what charges?' I cried; and then he wanted to speak privately to you. But I told him that of all persons he must not speak to you if he had anything painful to tell; for that you were too much disturbed already, and had been for some hours, out of anxiety and terror about my mistress, to bear much more. So, when he heard that, he was less willing to speak freely than before. He might prove wrong, he said; he might give offence; things might turn out far otherwise than according to first appearances. For his part, he could not believe anything amiss of so sweet a lady. And, after all, it would be better to wait till we reached the office."

Thus much then was clear—Agnes was under some accusation. This was already worse than the worst I had anticipated. "And then," said I, thinking aloud to Hannah, "one of two things is apparent to me: either the accusation is one of pure hellish malice, without a colour of probability

or the shadow of a foundation, and that way, alas! I am driven in my fears by that Hungarian woman's prophecy; or, which but for my desponding heart I should be more inclined to think, the charge has grown out of my poor wife's rustic ignorance as to the usages then recently established by law with regard to the kind of money that could be legally tendered. This, however, was a suggestion that did not tend to alleviate my anxiety; and my nervousness had mounted to a painful, almost to a disabling, degree, by the time we reached the office. Already on our road thither some parties had passed us who were conversing with eagerness upon the case. So much we collected from the many and ardent expressions about "the lady's beauty," though the rest of such words as we could catch were ill calculated to relieve my suspense. This, then, at least, was certain—that my poor timid Agnes had already been exhibited before a tumultuous crowd; that her name and reputation had gone forth as a subject of discussion for the public; and that the domestic seclusion and privacy within which it was her matronly privilege to move had already undergone a rude violation.

The office, and all the purlieus of the office, were occupied by a dense crowd. That, perhaps, was always the case, more or less, at this time of day; but at present the crowd was manifestly possessed by a more than ordinary interest; and there was a unity in this possessing interest. All were talking on the same subject—the case in which Agnes had so recently appeared in some character or other; and by this time it became but too certain in the character of an accused person. Pity was the prevailing sentiment amongst the mob; but the opinions varied much as to the probable criminality of the prisoner. I made my way into the office. The presiding magistrates had all retired for the afternoon, and would not reassemble until eight o'clock in the evening. Some clerks only or officers of the court remained, who were too much harassed by applications for various forms and papers connected with the routine of public business, and by other official duties which required signatures or attestations, to find much leisure for answering individual questions. Some, however, listened with a marked air of attention to

my earnest request for the circumstantial details of the case ; but finally referred me to a vast folio volume, in which were entered all the charges, of whatever nature, involving any serious tendency,—in fact, all that exceeded a misdemeanour,—in the regular chronological succession according to which they came before the magistrate. Here, in this vast calendar of guilt and misery, amidst the *aliases* or cant designations of ruffians, prostitutes, felons, stood the description, at full length, Christian and surnames all properly registered, of my Agnes—of her whose very name had always sounded to my ears like the very echo of mountain innocence, purity, and pastoral simplicity. Here in another column stood the name and residence of her accuser. I shall call him *Barratt* ; for that was amongst his names, and a name by which he had at one period of his infamous life been known to the public, though not his principal name or the one which he had thought fit to assume at this era. James Barratt, then, as I shall here call him, was a haberdasher, keeping a large and conspicuous shop in a very crowded, and what was then considered a fashionable, part of the city. The charge was plain and short. Did I live to read it? It accused Agnes M—— of having on that morning secreted in her muff, and feloniously carried away, a valuable piece of Mechlin lace, the property of James Barratt ; and the result of the first examination was thus communicated in a separate column, written in red ink : "Remanded to the second day after to-morrow for final examination." Everything in this sin-polluted register was in manuscript ; but at night the records of each day were regularly transferred to a printed journal, enlarged by comments and explanatory descriptions from some one of the clerks whose province it was to furnish this intelligence to the public journals. On that same night, therefore, would go forth to the world such an account of the case, and such a description of my wife's person, as would inevitably summon to the next exhibition of her misery, as by special invitation and advertisement, the whole world of this vast metropolis—the idle, the curious, the brutal, the hardened amateur in spectacles of woe, and the benign philanthropist who frequents such scenes with the purpose of carrying alleviation to their afflictions. All alike, whatever

might be their motives or the spirit of their actions, would rush (as to some grand festival of curiosity and sentimental luxury) to this public martyrdom of my innocent wife.

Meantime, what was the first thing to be done? Manifestly, to see Agnes: her account of the affair might suggest the steps to be taken. Prudence, therefore, at any rate, prescribed this course; and my heart would not have tolerated any other. I applied, therefore, at once for information as to the proper mode of effecting this purpose without delay. What was my horror at learning that, by a recent regulation of all the police offices, under the direction of the public minister who presided over that department of the national administration, no person could be admitted to an interview with any accused party during the progress of the official examinations, or, in fact, until the final committal of the prisoner for trial! This rule was supposed to be attended by great public advantages, and had rarely been relaxed—never, indeed, without a special interposition of the police minister authorizing its suspension. But was the exclusion absolute and universal? Might not, at least, a female servant, simply as the bearer of such articles as were indispensable to female delicacy and comfort, have access to her mistress? No; the exclusion was total and unconditional. To argue the point was manifestly idle: the subordinate officers had no discretion in the matter; nor, in fact, had any other official person, whatever were his rank, except the supreme one; and to him I neither had any obvious means of introduction nor (in case of obtaining such an introduction) any chance of success; for the spirit of the rule, I foresaw it would be answered, applied with especial force to cases like the present.

Mere human feelings of pity, sympathy with my too visible agitation, superadded to something of perhaps reverence for the blighting misery that was now opening its artillery upon me,—for misery has a privilege, and everywhere is felt to be a holy thing,—had combined to procure for me some attention and some indulgence hitherto. Answers had been given with precision, explanations made at length, and anxiety shown to satisfy my inquiries. But this could not last: the inexorable necessities of public business, coming

back in a torrent upon the official people after this momentary interruption, forbade them to indulge any further consideration for an individual case; and I saw that I must not stay any longer. I was rapidly coming to be regarded as a hindrance to the movement of public affairs; and the recollection that I might again have occasion for some appeal to these men in their official characters admonished me not to abuse my privilege of the moment. After returning thanks, therefore, for the disposition shown to oblige me, I retired.

Slowly did I and Hannah retrace our steps. Hannah sustained in the tone of her spirits, by the extremity of her anger, a mood of feeling which I did not share. Indignation was to her in the stead of consolation and hope. I, for my part, could not seek even a momentary shelter from my tempestuous affliction in that temper of mind. The man who could accuse my Agnes, and accuse her of such a crime, I felt to be a monster; and in my thoughts he was already doomed to a bloody atonement (atonement! alas! what atonement?) whenever the time arrived that *her* cause would not be prejudiced, or the current of public feeling made to turn in his favour by investing him with the semblance of an injured or suffering person. So much was settled in my thoughts with the stern serenity of a decree issuing from a judgment seat. But that gave no relief, no shadow of relief, to the misery which was now consuming me. Here was an end, in one hour, to the happiness of a life. In one hour it had given way, root and branch—had melted like so much frostwork or a pageant of vapoury exhalations. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and yet for ever and ever, I comprehended the total ruin of my situation. The case, as others might think, was yet in suspense; and there was room enough for very rational hopes, especially where there was an absolute certainty of innocence. Total freedom from all doubt on that point seemed to justify almost more than hopes. This might be said, and most people would have been more or less consoled by it. I was not. I felt as certain, as irredeemably, as hopelessly certain, of the final results as though I had seen the record in the books of heaven. "Hope nothing," I said to myself; "think not of

hope in this world; but think only how best to walk steadily, and not to reel like a creature wanting discourse of reason, or incapable of religious hopes, under the burden which it has pleased God to impose, and which in this life cannot be shaken off. The countenance of man is made to look upward and to the skies. Thither also point henceforwards your heart and your thoughts. Never again let your thoughts travel earthwards. Settle them on the heavens, to which your Agnes is already summoned. The call is clear, and not to be mistaken. Little in *her* fate now depends upon you or upon anything that man can do. Look, therefore, to yourself; see that you make not shipwreck of your heavenly freight because your earthly freight is lost; and miss not, by any acts of wild and presumptuous despair, that final reunion with your Agnes which can only be descried through vistas that open through the heavens."

Such were the thoughts—thoughts often made audible—which came spontaneously like oracles from afar as I strode homewards with Hannah by my side. Her, meantime, I seemed to hear; for at times I seemed and I intended to answer her. But answer her I did not; for not ten words of all that she said did I really and consciously hear. How I went through that night is more entirely a blank in my memory, more entirely a chapter of chaos and the confusion of chaos, than any other passage the most impressive in my life. If I even slumbered for a moment, as at intervals I did sometimes, though never sitting down, but standing or pacing about throughout the night, and if in this way I attained a momentary respite from self-consciousness, no sooner had I reached this enviable state of oblivion than some internal sting of irritation *as* rapidly dispersed the whole fickle fabric of sleep, and as if the momentary trance —this fugitive beguilement of my woe—had been conceded by a demon's subtle malice only with the purpose of barbing the pang by thus forcing it into a stronger relief through the insidious peace preceding it. It is a well-known and most familiar experience to all the sons and daughters of affliction, that under no circumstances is the piercing, lancinating torment of a recent calamity felt so keenly as in the first

moments of awaking in the morning from the night's slumbers. Just at the very instant when the clouds of sleep and the whole fantastic illusions of dreaminess are dispersing,—just as the realities of life are reassuming their steadfast forms, reshaping themselves, and settling anew into those fixed relations which they are to preserve throughout the waking hours,—in that particular crisis of transition from the unreal to the real, the woe which besieges the brain and the lifesprings at the heart rushes in afresh amongst the other crowd of realities, and has, at the moment of restoration, literally the force and liveliness of a new birth—the very same pang, and no whit feebler, as that which belonged to it when it was first made known. From the total hush of oblivion which had buried it and sealed it up, as it were, during the sleeping hours, it starts into sudden life on our first awaking, and is to all intents and purposes a new, and not an old, affliction—one which brings with it the old original shock which attended its first annunciation.

That night, that first night of separation from my wife,—*how* it passed I know not; I only know *that* it passed, I being in our common bed chamber, that holiest of all temples that are consecrated to human attachments whenever the heart is pure of man and woman and the love is strong—I being in that bed chamber, once the temple, now the sepulchre, of our happiness; I there, and my wife, my innocent wife, in a dungeon. As the morning light began to break, somebody knocked at the door: it was Hannah. She took my hand: misery levels all feeble distinctions of station, sex, age. She noticed my excessive feverishness, and gravely remonstrated with me upon the necessity there was that I should maintain as much health as possible for the sake of "others," if not for myself. She then brought me some tea, which refreshed me greatly; for I had tasted nothing at all beyond a little water since the preceding morning's breakfast. This refreshment seemed to relax and thaw the stiff, frozen state of cheerless, rayless despair in which I had passed the night. I became susceptible of consolation,—that consolation which lies involved in kindness and gentleness of manner,—if not susceptible more than before of any positive

hope. I sat down ; and, having no witnesses to my weakness but this kind and faithful woman, I wept, and I found a relief in tears ; and she, with the ready sympathy of woman, wept along with me. All at once she ventured upon the circumstances (so far as she had been able to collect them from the reports of those who had been present at the examination) of our calamity. There was little indeed either to excite or to gratify any interest or curiosity separate from the *personal* interest inevitably connected with a case to which there were two such parties as a brutal, sensual, degraded ruffian on one side, in character of accuser, and on the other, as defendant, a meek angel of a woman, timid and fainting from the horrors of her situation, and under the licentious gaze of the crowd, yet, at the same time, bold in conscious innocence, and, in the very teeth of the suspicions which beset her, winning the good opinion as well as the good wishes of all who saw her. There had been at this first examination little for her to say beyond the assigning her name, age, and place of abode ; and here it was fortunate that her own excellent good sense concurred with her perfect integrity and intuitive hatred of all indirect or crooked courses in prompting her to an undisguised statement of the simple truth, without a momentary hesitation or attempt either at evasion or suppression. With equally good intentions in similar situations, many a woman has seriously injured her cause by slight evasions of the entire truth, where nevertheless her only purpose has been the natural and ingenuous one of seeking to save the reputation untainted of a name which she felt to have been confided to her keeping. The purpose was an honourable one, but erroneously pursued. Agnes fell into no such error. She answered calmly, simply, and truly to every question put by the magistrates ; and beyond *that* there was little opportunity for her to speak, the whole business of this preliminary examination being confined to the deposition of the accuser as to the circumstances under which he alleged the act of felonious appropriation to have taken place. These circumstances were perfectly uninteresting considered in themselves ; but amongst them was one which to us had the most shocking interest, from the absolute proof thus furnished of a deep-laid plot against

Agnes. But for this one circumstance there would have been a possibility that the whole had originated in error—error growing out of and acting upon a nature originally suspicious, and confirmed, perhaps, by an unfortunate experience. And, in proportion as that was possible, the chances increased that the accuser might, as the examinations advanced and the winning character of the accused party began to develop itself, begin to see his error and to retract his own over-hasty suspicions. But now we saw at a glance that for this hope there was no countenance whatever, since one solitary circumstance sufficed to establish a conspiracy. The deposition bore that the lace had been secreted and afterwards detected in a muff. Now, it was a fact, as well known to both of us as the fact of Agnes having gone out at all, that she had laid aside her winter's dress for the first time on this genial, sunny day. Muff she had not at the time, nor could have had appropriately from the style of her costume in other respects. What was the effect upon us of this remarkable discovery? Of course there died at once the hope of any abandonment by the prosecutor of his purpose, because here was proof of a predetermined plot. This hope died at once; but then, as it was one which never had presented itself to my mind, I lost nothing by which I had ever been solaced. On the other hand, it will be obvious that a new hope at the same time arose to take its place; viz. the reasonable one that by this single detection, if once established, we might raise a strong presumption of conspiracy, and, moreover, that, as a leading fact or clue, it might serve to guide us in detecting others. Hannah was sanguine in this expectation; and for a moment her hopes were contagiously exciting to mine. But the hideous despondency which in my mind had settled upon the whole affair from the very first, the superstitious presentiment I had of a total blight brooding over the entire harvest of my life and its promises (tracing itself originally, I am almost ashamed to own, up to that prediction of the Hungarian woman), denied me steady light, anything—all, in short, but a wandering ray of hope. It was right, of course, — nay, indispensable, — that the circumstance of the muff should be strongly insisted upon at the next examination, pressed against the prosecutor, and

sifted to the uttermost. An able lawyer would turn this to a triumphant account, and it would be admirable as a means of preëngaging the good opinion as well as the sympathies of the public in behalf of the prisoner. But, for its final effect, my conviction remained, not to be shaken, that all would be useless—that our doom had gone forth, and was irrevocable.

Let me not linger too much over those sad times. Morning came on as usual; for it is strange, but true, that to the very wretched it seems wonderful that times and seasons should keep their appointed courses in the midst of such mighty overthrows and such interruption to the courses of their own wonted happiness and their habitual expectations. Why should morning and night, why should all movements in the natural world, be so regular, whilst in the moral world all is so irregular and anomalous? Yet the sun and the moon rise and set as usual upon the mightiest revolutions of empire and of worldly fortune that this planet ever beholds; and it is sometimes even a comfort to know that this will be the case. A great criminal, sentenced to an agonizing punishment, has derived a fortitude and a consolation from recollecting that the day would run its inevitable course; that a day, after all, was *but* a day; that the mighty wheel of alternate light and darkness must and would revolve; and that the evening star would rise as usual, and shine with its untroubled lustre upon the dust and ashes of what *had* indeed suffered, and so recently, the most bitter pangs, but would then have ceased to suffer. "La journée," said Damien,—

"La journée sera dure, mais elle se passera."

"—— *Se passera*": yes, that is true, I whispered to myself; my day also, my season of trial, will be hard to bear; but that also will have an end; that also "*se passera.*" Thus I talked or thought so long as I thought at all; for the hour was now rapidly approaching when thinking in any shape would for some time be ât an end for me.

That day, as the morning advanced, I went again, accompanied by Hannah, to the police court, and to the prison—a vast, ancient, in parts ruinous, and most gloomy pile of building. In those days the administration of justice was, if

not more corrupt, certainly in its inferior departments by far more careless, than it is at present, and liable to thousands of interruptions and mal-practices, supporting themselves upon old traditionary usages which required at least half a century, and the shattering everywhere given to old systems by the French Revolution, together with the universal energy of mind applied to those subjects over the whole length and breadth of Christendom, to approach with any effectual reforms. Knowing this, and having myself had direct personal cognizance of various cases in which bribery had been applied with success, I was not without considerable hope that perhaps Hannah and myself might avail ourselves of this irregular passport through the gates of the prison ; and, had the new regulation been of somewhat longer standing, there is little doubt that I should have been found right. Unfortunately, as yet it had all the freshness of new-born vigour, and kept itself in remembrance by the singular irritation it excited. Besides this, it was a pet novelty of one particular minister, new to the possession of power, anxious to distinguish himself, proud of his creative functions within the range of his office, and very sensitively jealous on the point of opposition to his mandates. Vain, therefore, on this day were all my efforts to corrupt the jailers ; and, in fact, anticipating a time when I might have occasion to corrupt some of them for a more important purpose and on a larger scale, I did not think it prudent to proclaim my character beforehand as one who tampered with such means, and thus to arm against myself those jealousies in official people which it was so peculiarly important that I should keep asleep.

All that day, however, I lingered about the avenues and vast courts in the precincts of the prison, and near one particular wing of the building, which had been pointed out to me by a jailer as the section allotted to those who were in the situation of Agnes ; that is, waiting their final commitment for trial. The building generally he could indicate with certainty ; but he professed himself unable to indicate the particular part of it which "the young woman brought in on the day previous" would be likely to occupy ; consequently he could not point out the window from which her cell (her "*cell !*" what a word !) would be lighted. "But,

master," he went on to say, "I would advise nobody to try that game." He looked with an air so significant, and at the same time used a gesture so indicative of private understanding, that I at once apprehended his meaning, and assured him that he had altogether misconstrued my drift; that, as to attempts at escape or at any mode of communicating with the prisoner from the outside, I trusted all *that* was perfectly needless; and that, at any rate, in my eyes it was perfectly hopeless. "Well, master," he replied, "that's neither here nor there. You've come down handsomely, that I *will* say; and, where a gentleman acts like a gentleman and behaves himself as such, I'm not the man to go and split upon him for a word. To be sure, it's quite nat'ral that a gentleman, —put case that a young woman is his fancy woman,—it's nothing but nat'ral that he should want to get her out of such an old rat hole as this, where many's the fine-timbered creature, both he and she, that has lain to rot, and has never got out of the old trap at all, first or last——" "How so?" I interrupted him; "surely they don't detain the corpses of prisoners?" "Ay; but mind you, put case that he or that she should die in this rat trap before sentence is passed, why then the prison counts them as its own children, and buries them in its own chapel—that old stack of pigeon holes that you see up yonder to the right hand." So then, after all, thought I, if my poor Agnes should, in her desolation and solitary confinement to these wretched walls, find her frail strength give way,—should the moral horrors of her situation work their natural effect upon her health, and she should chance to die within this dungeon,—here within this same dungeon will she lie to the resurrection; and in that case her prison doors have already closed upon her forever. The man, who perhaps had some rough kindness in his nature, though tainted by the mercenary feelings too inevitably belonging to his situation, seemed to guess at the character of my ruminations by the change of my countenance; for he expressed some pity for my being "in so much trouble"; and it seemed to increase his respect for me that this trouble should be directed to the case of a woman; for he appeared to have a manly sense of the peculiar appeal made to the honour and gallantry of man by the mere

general fact of the feebleness and the dependence of woman. I looked at him more attentively in consequence of the feeling tone in which he now spoke, and was surprised that I had not more particularly noticed him before. He was a fine-looking, youngish man, with a bold, Robin Hood style of figure and appearance; and, morally speaking, he was absolutely transfigured to my eyes by the effect worked upon him for the moment through the simple calling up of his better nature. However, he recurred to his cautions about the peril in a legal sense of tampering with the windows, bolts, and bars of the old decaying prison; which, in fact, precisely according to the degree in which its absolute power over its prisoners was annually growing less and less, grew more and more jealous of its own reputation, and punished the attempts to break loose with the more severity, in exact proportion as they were the more tempting by the chances of success. I persisted in disowning any schemes of the sort, and especially upon the ground of their hopelessness. But this, on the other hand, was a ground that in his inner thoughts he treated with scorn; and I could easily see that, with a little skilful management of opportunity, I might, upon occasion, draw from him all the secrets he knew as to the special points of infirmity in this old ruinous building. For the present, and until it should certainly appear that there was some use to be derived from this species of knowledge, I forbore to raise superfluous suspicions by availing myself further of his communicative disposition. Taking, however, the precaution of securing his name, together with his particular office and designation in the prison, I parted from him as if to go home, but in fact to resume my sad roamings up and down the precincts of the jail.

What made these precincts much larger than otherwise they would have been was the circumstance that, by a usage derived from older days, both criminal prisoners and those who were prisoners for debt equally fell under the custody of this huge caravanserai for the indifferent reception of crime, of misdemeanour, and of misfortune. And those who came under the two first titles were lodged here through all stages of their connexion with public justice; alike when mere objects of vague suspicion to the police,

when under examination upon a specific charge, when fully committed for trial, when convicted and under sentence, awaiting the execution of that sentence, and, in a large proportion of cases, even through their final stage of punishment, when it happened to be of any nature compatible with in-door confinement. Hence it arose that the number of those who haunted the prison gates, with or without a title to admission, was enormous ; all the relatives, or more properly the acquaintances and connexions, of the criminal population within the prison being swelled by all the families of needy debtors who came daily, either to offer the consolation of their society, or to diminish their common expenditure by uniting their slender establishments. One of the rules applied to the management of this vast multitude that were everyday candidates for admission was, that to save the endless trouble, as well as risk, perhaps, of opening and shutting the main gates to every successive arrival, periodic intervals were fixed for the admission by wholesale; and, as these periods came round every two hours, it would happen at many parts of the day that vast crowds accumulated, waiting for the next opening of the gate. These crowds were assembled in two or three large outer courts, in which also were many stalls and booths, kept there upon some local privilege of ancient inheritance, or upon some other plea made good by gifts or bribes—some by Jews, and others by Christians perhaps equally Jewish. Superadded to these stationary elements of this miscellaneous population were others, drawn thither by pure motives of curiosity, so that altogether an almost permanent mob was gathered together in these courts ; and amid this mob it was,—from I know not what definite motive, partly because I thought it probable that amongst these people I should hear the cause of Agnes peculiarly the subject of conversation,—and so, in fact, it did really happen,—but partly, and even more, I believe, because I now awfully began to shrink from solitude ; tumult I must have, and distraction of thought,—amid this mob, I say, it was that I passed two days. Feverish I had been from the first ; and from bad to worse, in such a case, was, at any rate, a natural progress. But, perhaps, also, amongst this crowd of the poor, the abjectly

wretched, the ill fed, the desponding, and the dissolute, there might be very naturally a larger body of contagion lurking than according to their mere numerical expectations. There was at that season a very extensive depopulation going on in some quarters of this great metropolis and in other cities of the same empire by means of a very malignant typhus. This fever is supposed to be the peculiar product of jails ; and, though it had not as yet been felt as a scourge and devastator of this particular jail, or at least the consequent mortality had been hitherto kept down to a moderate amount, yet it was highly probable that a certain quantity of contagion, much beyond the proportion of other popular assemblages less uniformly wretched in their composition, was here to be found all day long; and doubtless my excited state and irritable habit of body had offered a peculiar predisposition that favoured the rapid development of this contagion. However this might be, the result was that, on the evening of the second day which I spent in haunting the purlieus of the prison (consequently the night preceding the second public examination of Agnes), I was attacked by ardent fever in such unmitigated fury that before morning I had lost all command of my intellectual faculties. For some weeks I became a pitiable maniac, and in every sense the wreck of my former self ; and seven entire weeks, together with the better half of an eighth week, had passed over my head whilst I lay unconscious of time and its dreadful freight of events, excepting in so far as my disordered brain, by its fantastic coinages, created endless mimicries and mockeries of these events, less substantial, but oftentimes less afflicting or less agitating. It would have been well for me had my destiny decided that I was not to be recalled to this world of woe ; but I had no such happiness in store. I recovered ; and through twenty and eight years my groans have recorded the sorrow I feel that I did.

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I shall not rehearse, circumstantially and point by point, the sad unfolding, as it proceeded through successive revelations to me, of all which had happened during my state of physical incapacity. When I first became aware that my

wandering senses had returned to me, and knew, by the cessation of all throbbings and the unutterable pains that had so long possessed my brain, that I was now returning from the gates of death, a sad confusion assailed me as to some indefinite cloud of evil that had been hovering over me at the time when I first fell into a state of insensibility. For a time I struggled vainly to recover the lost connexion of my thoughts, and I endeavoured ineffectually to address myself to sleep. I opened my eyes, but found the glare of light painful beyond measure. Strength, however, it seemed to me that I had, and more than enough, to raise myself out of bed. I made the attempt; but fell back, almost giddy with the effort. At the sound of the disturbance which I had thus made, a woman whom I did not know came from behind a curtain and spoke to me. Shrinking from any communication with a stranger, especially one whose discretion I could not estimate in making discoveries to me with the requisite caution, I asked her simply what o'clock it was.

"Eleven in the forenoon," she replied.

"And what day of the month?"

"The second," was her brief answer.

I felt almost a sense of shame in adding, "The second! But of what month?"

"Of June," was the startling rejoinder.

On the 8th of April I had fallen ill; and it was now actually the 2d of June. O sickening calculation! revolting register of hours! for in that same moment which brought back this one recollection, perhaps by steadying my brain, rushed back in a torrent all the other dreadful remembrances of the period, and now the more so because, though the event was still uncertain as regarded my knowledge, it must have become dreadfully certain as regarded the facts of the case and the happiness of all who were concerned. Alas! one little circumstance too painfully assured me that this event had not been a happy one. Had Agnes been restored to her liberty and her home, where would she have been found but watching at my bedside? That too certainly I knew; and the inference was too bitter to support.

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On this same day, some hours afterwards, upon Hannah's

return from the city, I received from her, and heard with perfect calmness, the whole sum of evil which awaited me. Little Francis—she took up her tale at that point—"was with God"; so she expressed herself. He had died of the same fever which had attacked me—had died and been buried nearly five weeks before. Too probably he had caught the infection from me. Almost,—such are the caprices of human feeling,—almost I could have rejoiced that this young memorial of my vanished happiness had vanished also. It gave me a pang, nevertheless, that the grave should thus have closed upon him before I had seen his fair little face again. But I steeled my heart to hear worse things than this. Next she went on to inform me that already, on the first or second day of our calamity, she had taken upon herself, without waiting for authority, on observing the rapid approaches of illness in me, and arguing the state of helplessness which would follow, to write off at once a summons in the most urgent terms to the brother of my wife. This gentleman, whom I shall call Pierpoint, was a high-spirited, generous young man as I have ever known. When I say that he was a sportsman, that at one season of the year he did little else than pursue his darling amusement of fox-hunting,—for which, indeed, he had almost a maniacal passion,—saying this, I shall already have prejudged him in the opinions of many, who fancy all such persons the slaves of corporeal enjoyments. But, with submission, the truth lies the other way. According to my experience, people of these habits have their bodies more than usually under their command, as being subdued by severe exercise; and their minds, neither better nor worse on an average than those of their neighbours, are more available from being so much more rarely clogged by morbid habits in that uneasy yoke-fellow of the intellectual part—the body. He, at all events, was a man to justify in his own person this way of thinking; for he was a man not only of sound, but even of bold and energetic, intellect, and, in all moral respects, one whom any man might feel proud to call his friend. This young man, Pierpoint, without delay obeyed the summons; and, on being made acquainted with what had already passed, the first step he took was to call upon Barratt; and, without

further question than what might ascertain his identity, he proceeded to inflict upon him a severe horsewhipping. A worse step on his sister's account he could not have taken. Previously to this the popular feeling had run strongly against Barratt; but now its unity was broken. A new element was introduced into the question. Democratic feelings were armed against this outrage; gentlemen and nobles, it was said, thought themselves not amenable to justice; and, again, the majesty of the law was offended at this intrusion upon an affair already under solemn course of adjudication. Everything, however, passes away under the healing hand of time; and this also faded from the public mind. People remembered also that he was a brother, and in that character, at any rate, had a right to some allowances for his intemperance; and what quickened the oblivion of the affair was,—which in itself was sufficiently strange,—that Barratt did not revive the case in the public mind by seeking legal reparation for his injuries. It was, however, still matter of regret that Pierpoint should have indulged himself in this movement of passion, since undoubtedly it broke and disturbed the else uniform stream of public indignation, by investing the original aggressor with something like the character of an injured person, and therefore with some set-off to plead against his own wantonness of malice. His malice might now assume the nobler aspect of revenge.

Thus far, in reporting the circumstances, Hannah had dallied, thus far I had rejoiced that she dallied, with the main burden of the woe; but now there remained nothing to dally with any longer; and she rushed along in her narrative, hurrying to tell—I hurrying to hear. A second, a third, examination had ensued, then a final committal—all this within a week. By that time all the world was agitated with the case; literally not the city only, vast as that city was, but the nation, was convulsed, and divided into parties upon the question whether the prosecution were one of mere malice or not. The very government of the land was reported to be equally interested, and almost equally divided in opinion. In this state of public feeling came the trial. Image to yourself, O reader, whosoever you are, the intensity of the excitement which by that time had arisen in all people to be

spectators of the scene ; then image to yourself the effect of all this—a perfect consciousness that in herself, as a centre, was settled the whole mighty interest of the exhibition—that interest again of so dubious and mixed a character—sympathy in some with mere misfortune—sympathy in others with female frailty and guilt, not perhaps founded upon an absolute unwavering belief in her innocence, even amongst those who were most loud and positive as partisans in affirming it ; and then remember that all this hideous scenical display and notoriety settled upon one whose very nature, constitutionally timid, recoiled with the triple agony of womanly shame, of matronly dignity, of insulted innocence, from every mode and shape of public display. Combine all these circumstances and elements of the case, and you may faintly enter into the situation of my poor Agnes. Perhaps the best way to express it at once is by recurring to the case of a young female Christian martyr, in the early ages of Christianity, exposed in the bloody amphitheatre of Rome or Verona to "fight with wild beasts," as it was expressed in mockery—she to fight ! the lamb to fight with lions ! But in reality the young martyr *had* a fight to maintain, and a fight (in contempt of that cruel mockery) fiercer than the fiercest of her persecutors could have faced, perhaps—the combat with the instincts of her own shrinking, trembling, fainting nature. Such a fight had my Agnes to maintain ; and at that time there was a large party of gentlemen in whom the gentlemanly instinct was predominant, and who felt so powerfully the cruel indignities of her situation that they made a public appeal in her behalf. One thing, and a strong one, which they said, was this : "We all talk and move in this case as if, because the question appears doubtful to some people, and the accused party to some people wears a doubtful character, it would follow that she therefore had in reality a mixed character, composed in joint proportions of the best and the worst that is imputed to her. But let us not forget that this mixed character belongs not to her, but to the infirmity of our human judgments. *They* are mixed ; *they* are dubious ; but she is not. She is, or she is not, guilty ; there is no middle case. And let us consider for a single moment that, if this young lady (as many among us heartily believe) *is* innocent, then, and

upon that supposition, let us consider how cruel we should all think the public exposure which aggravates the other injuries (as in that case they must be thought) to which her situation exposes her." They went on to make some suggestions for the officers of the court in preparing the arrangements for the trial, and some also for the guidance of the audience, which showed the same generous anxiety for sparing the feelings of the prisoner. If these did not wholly succeed in repressing the open avowal of coarse and brutal curiosity amongst the intensely vulgar, at least they availed to diffuse amongst the neutral and indifferent part of the public a sentiment of respect and forbearance which, emanating from high quarters, had a very extensive influence upon most of what met the eye or the ear of my poor wife. She, on the day of trial, was supported by her brother; and by that time she needed support indeed. I was reported to be dying; her little son was dead; neither had she been allowed to see him. Perhaps these things, by weaning her from all further care about life, might have found their natural effect in making her indifferent to the course of the trial or even to its issue. And so, perhaps, in the main, they did; but at times some lingering sense of outraged dignity, some fitful gleams of old sympathies, "the hectic of a moment," came back upon her, and prevailed over the deadening stupor of her grief. Then she shone for a moment into a starry light, sweet and woeful to remember. Then —— But why linger? I hurry to the close. She was pronounced guilty, whether by a jury or a bench of judges I do not say—having determined, from the beginning, to give no hint of the land in which all these events happened; neither is that of the slightest consequence. Guilty she was pronounced; but sentence at that time was deferred. Ask me not, I beseech you, about the muff or other circumstances inconsistent with the hostile evidence. These circumstances had the testimony, you will observe, of my own servants only; nay, as it turned out, of one servant exclusively; *that* naturally diminished their value. And, on the other side, evidence was arrayed, perjury was suborned, that would have wrecked a wilderness of simple truth trusting to its own unaided forces. What followed? Did this judgment of the court settle the opinion

of the public? Opinion of the public! Did it settle the winds? Did it settle the motion of the Atlantic? Wilder, fiercer, and louder grew the cry against the wretched accuser; mighty had been the power over the vast audience of the dignity, the affliction, the perfect simplicity, and the Madonna beauty of the prisoner. That beauty, so childlike, and at the same time so saintly, made, besides, so touching in its pathos by means of the abandonment, the careless abandonment, and the infinite desolation, of her air and manner, would of itself, and without further aid, have made many converts. Much more was done by the simplicity of her statements and the indifference with which she neglected to improve any strong points in her own favour—the indifference, as every heart perceived, of despairing grief. Then came the manners on the hostile side—the haggard consciousness of guilt, the drooping tone, the bravado and fierce strut which sought to dissemble all this. Not one amongst all the witnesses assembled on that side had (by all agreement) the bold, natural tone of conscious uprightness. Hence it could not be surprising that the storm of popular opinion made itself heard with a louder and a louder sound. The government itself began to be disturbed; the ministers of the sovereign were agitated; and, had no menaces been thrown out, it was generally understood that they would have given way to the popular voice, now continually more distinct and clamorous. In the midst of all this tumult obscure murmurs began to arise that Barratt had practised the same or similar villainies in former instances. One case in particular was beginning to be whispered about, which at once threw a light upon the whole affair. It was the case of a young and very beautiful married woman, who had been on the very brink of a catastrophe such as had befallen my own wife, when some seasonable interference, of what nature was not known, had critically delivered her. This case arose "like a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand," then spread and threatened to burst in tempest upon the public mind; when all at once, more suddenly even than it had arisen, it was hushed up, or in some way disappeared. But a trifling circumstance made it possible to trace this case; in after times, when means offered, but unfortunately no particular purpose of good, nor

any purpose, in fact, beyond that of curiosity, it *was* traced ; and enough was soon ascertained to have blown to fragments any possible conspiracy emanating from this Barratt, had that been of any further importance. However, in spite of all that money or art could effect, a sullen growl continued to be heard amongst the populace of villainies many and profound that had been effected or attempted by this Barratt; and accordingly, much in the same way as was many years afterwards practised in London, when a hosier had caused several young people to be prosecuted to death for passing forged bank-notes, the wrath of the people showed itself in marking the shop for vengeance upon any favourable occasion offering through fire or riots, and in the meantime in deserting it. These things had been going on for some time when I awoke from my long delirium ; but the effect they had produced upon a weak and obstinate and haughty government, or at least upon the weak and obstinate and haughty member of the government who presided in the police administration, was, to confirm and rivet the line of conduct which had been made the object of popular denunciation. More energetically, more scornfully, to express that determination of flying in the face of public opinion and censure, four days before my awakening, Agnes had been brought up to receive her sentence. On that same day (nay, it was said in that same hour), petitions, very numerously signed, and various petitions from different ranks, different ages, different sexes, were carried up to the throne, praying, upon manifold grounds, but all noticing the extreme doubtfulness of the case, for an unconditional pardon. By whose advice or influence it was guessed easily, though never exactly ascertained, these petitions were unanimously, almost contemptuously, rejected. And, to express the contempt of public opinion as powerfully as possible, Agnes was sentenced by the court, reassembled in full pomp, order, and ceremonial costume, to a punishment the severest that the laws allowed—viz. hard labour for ten years. The people raged more than ever; threats public and private were conveyed to the ears of the minister chiefly concerned in the responsibility, and who had indeed, by empty and ostentatious talking, assumed that responsibility to himself in a way that was perfectly needless.

Thus stood matters when I awoke to consciousness; and this was the fatal journal of the interval—interval so long, as measured by my fierce calendar of delirium—so brief, measured by the huge circuit of events which it embraced, and their mightiness for evil. Wrath, wrath immeasurable, unimaginable, unmitigable, burned at my heart like a cancer. The worst had come. And the thing that kills a man for action,—the living in two climates at once—a torrid and a frigid zone of hope and fear,—that was past. Weak, suppose I were for the moment; I felt that a day or two might bring back my strength. No miserable tremors of hope *now* shook my nerves; if they shook from that inevitable rocking of the waters that follows a storm, so much might be pardoned to the infirmity of a nature that could not lay aside its fleshly necessities, nor altogether forgo its homage to "these frail elements," but which by inspiration already lived within a region where no voices were heard but the spiritual voices of transcendent passions—of

"Wrongs unrevenged and insults unredressed."

Six days from that time I was well—well and strong. I rose from bed; I bathed; I dressed—dressed as if I were a bridegroom. And that *was*, in fact, a great day in my life. I was to see Agnes. O yes! Permission had been obtained from the lordly minister that I should see my wife. Is it possible? Can such condescensions exist? Yes; solicitations from ladies, eloquent notes wet with ducal tears,—these had won from the thrice-radiant secretary, redolent of roseate attar, a countersign to some order or other, by which I,—yes, I,—under licence of a fop and supervision of a jailer, was to see and for a time to converse with my own wife.

The hour appointed for the first day's interview was eight o'clock in the evening. On the outside of the jail all was summer light and animation. The sports of children in the streets of mighty cities are but sad, and too painfully recall the circumstances of freedom and breezy nature that are not there. But still the pomp of glorious summer, and the presence, "not to be put by," of the everlasting light, that is either always present or always dawning,—these potent elements impregnate the very city life, and the dim reflex of

Nature which is found at the bottom of well-like streets, with more solemn powers to move and to soothe in summer. I struck upon the prison gates—the first among multitudes waiting to strike. Not because we struck, but because the hour had sounded, suddenly the gate opened ; and in we streamed. I, as a visitor for the first time, was immediately distinguished by the jailers, whose glance of the eye is fatally unerring. "Who was it that I wanted ?" At the name, a stir of emotion was manifest even there ; the dry bones stirred and moved ; the passions outside had long ago passed to the interior of this gloomy prison ; and not a man but had his hypothesis on the case ; not a man but had almost fought with some comrade (many had literally fought) about the merits of their several opinions.

If any man had expected a scene at this reunion he would have been disappointed. Exhaustion and the ravages of sorrow had left to dear Agnes so little power of animation or of action that her emotions were rather to be guessed at, both for kind and for degree, than directly to have been perceived. She was, in fact, a sick patient, far gone in an illness that should properly have confined her to bed, and was as much past the power of replying to my frenzied exclamations as a dying victim of fever of entering upon a strife of argument. In bed, however, she was not. When the door opened, she was discovered sitting at a table placed against the opposite wall, her head pillowed upon her arms, and these resting upon the table. Her beautiful long auburn hair had escaped from its confinement, and was floating over the table and her own person. She took no notice of the disturbance made by our entrance, did not turn, did not raise her head, nor make an effort to do so, nor by any sign whatever intimate that she was conscious of our presence until the turnkey in a respectful tone announced me. Upon that a low groan, or rather a feeble moan, showed that she had become aware of my presence, and relieved me from all apprehension of causing too sudden a shock by taking her in my arms. The turnkey had now retired : we were alone. I knelt by her side, threw my arms about her, and pressed her to my heart. She drooped her head upon my shoulder and lay for some time like one who slumbered ; but, alas !

not as she had used to slumber. Her breathing, which had been like that of sinless infancy, was now frightfully short and quick ; she seemed not properly to breathe, but to gasp. This, thought I, may be sudden agitation, and in that case she will gradually recover ; half an hour will restore her. Woe is me ! She did *not* recover ; and internally I said, She never *will* recover. The arrows have gone too deep for a frame so exquisite in its sensibility, and already her hours are numbered.

At this first visit I said nothing to her about the past ; *that*, and the whole extent to which our communications should go, I left rather to her own choice. At the second visit, however, upon some word or other arising which furnished an occasion for touching on this hateful topic, I pressed her, contrary to my own previous intention, for as full an account of the fatal event as she could without a distressing effort communicate. To my surprise she was silent—gloomily, almost it might have seemed obstinately, silent. A horrid thought came into my mind. Could it, might it, have been possible that my noble-minded wife, such she had ever seemed to me, was open to temptations of this nature ? Could it have been that in some moment of infirmity, when her better angel was away from her side, she had yielded to a sudden impulse of frailty, such as a second moment for consideration would have resisted, but which unhappily had been followed by no such opportunity of retrieval ? I had heard of such things. Cases there were in our own times (and not confined to one nation) when irregular impulses of this sort were known to have haunted and besieged natures not otherwise ignoble and base. I ran over some of the names amongst those which were taxed with this propensity. More than one were the names of people in a technical sense held noble. That nor any other consideration abated my horror. Better, I said, better (because more compatible with elevation of mind), better to have committed some bloody act — some murderous act. Dreadful was the panic I underwent. God pardon the wrong I did ! And even now I pray to him—as though the past thing were a future thing and capable of change—that he would forbid her forever to know what was the derogatory

thought I had admitted. I sometimes think, by recollecting a momentary blush that suffused her marble countenance,—I think, I fear, that she might have read what was fighting in my mind. Yet that would admit of another explanation. If she did read the very worst, meek saint ! she suffered no complaint or sense of that injury to escape her. It might, however, be that perception, or it might be that fear, which roused her to an effort that otherwise had seemed too revolting to undertake. She now rehearsed the whole steps of the affair from first to last; but the only material addition which her narrative made to that which the trial itself had involved was the following:—On two separate occasions previous to the last and fatal one, when she had happened to walk unaccompanied by me in the city, the monster Barratt had met her in the street. He had probably—and this was, indeed, subsequently ascertained—at first, and for some time afterwards, mistaken her rank, and had addressed some proposals to her, which, from the suppressed tone of his speaking or from her own terror and surprise, she had not clearly understood ; but enough had reached her alarmed ear to satisfy her that they were of a nature in the last degree licentious and insulting. Terrified and shocked rather than indignant,—for she too easily presumed the man to be a maniac,—she hurried homewards, and was rejoiced, on first venturing to look round when close to her own gate, to perceive that the man was not following. There, however, she was mistaken ; for, either on this occasion or on some other, he had traced her homewards. The last of these rencounters had occurred just three months before the fatal 6th of April ; and, if in any one instance Agnes had departed from the strict line of her duty as a wife, or had shown a defect of judgment, it was at this point, in not having frankly and fully reported the circumstances to me. On the last of these occasions I had met her at the garden gate, and had particularly remarked that she seemed agitated ; and now, at recalling these incidents, Agnes reminded me that I had noticed that circumstance to herself, and that she had answered me faithfully as to the main fact. It was true she had done so ; for she had said that she had just met a lunatic, who had alarmed her by fixing his attention upon herself

and speaking to her in a ruffian manner ; and it was also true that she did sincerely regard him in that light. This led me at the time to construe the whole affair into a casual collision with some poor maniac escaping from his keepers, and of no future moment, having passed by without present consequences. But, had she, instead of thus reporting her own erroneous impression, reported the entire circumstances of the case, I should have given them a very different interpretation. Affection for me, and fear to throw me needlessly into a quarrel with a man of apparently brutal and violent nature, —these considerations, as too often they do with the most upright wives, had operated to check Agnes in the perfect sincerity of her communications. She had told nothing *but* the truth—only, and fatally it turned out for us both, she had not told the *whole* truth. The very suppression to which she had reconciled herself, under the belief that thus she was providing for my safety and her own consequent happiness, had been the indirect occasion of ruin to both. It was impossible to show displeasure under such circumstances, or under any circumstances, to one whose self-reproaches were at any rate too bitter ; but certainly, as a general rule, every conscientious woman should resolve to consider her husband's honour in the first case, and far before all other regards whatsoever ; to make this the first, the second, the third law of her conduct, and his personal safety but the fourth or fifth. Yet women, and especially when the interests of children are at stake upon their husbands' safety, rarely indeed are able to take this Roman view of their duties.

To return to the narrative. Agnes had not, nor could have, the most remote suspicion of this Barratt's connexion with the shop which he had not accidentally entered ; and the sudden appearance of this wretch it was, at the very moment of finding herself charged with so vile and degrading an offence, that contributed most of all to rob her of her natural firmness, by suddenly revealing to her terrified heart the depth of the conspiracy which thus yawned like a gulf below her. And not only had this sudden horror, upon discovering a guilty design in what before had seemed accident, and links uniting remote incidents which else seemed casual and disconnected, greatly disturbed and con-

fused her manner,—which confusion again had become more intense upon her own consciousness that she *was* confused and that her manner was greatly to her disadvantage,—but—which was the worst effect of all, because the rest could not operate against her except upon those who were present to witness it, whereas this was noted down and recorded—so utterly did her confusion strip her of all presence of mind that she did not consciously notice (and consequently could not protest against at the moment when it was most important to do so and most natural) the important circumstance of the muff. This capital objection, therefore, though dwelt upon and improved to the utmost at the trial, was looked upon by the judges as an afterthought, and merely because it had not been seized upon by herself and urged in the first moments of her almost incapacitating terror on finding this amongst the circumstances of the charge against her. As if an ingenuous nature, in the very act of recoiling with horror from a criminal charge the most degrading, and in the very instant of discovering, with a perfect rapture of alarm, the too plausible appearance of probability amongst the circumstances, would be likely to pause, and, with attorney-like dexterity, to pick out the particular circumstance that might admit of being *proved* to be false, when the conscience proclaimed, though in despondence for the result, that all the circumstances were, as to the use made of them, one tissue of falsehoods! Agnes, who had made a powerful effort in speaking of the case at all, found her calmness increase as she advanced; and she now told me that in reality there were two discoveries which she made in the same instant, and not one only, which had disarmed her firmness and ordinary presence of mind. One I have mentioned—the fact of Barratt, the proprietor of the shop, being the same person who had in former instances persecuted her in the street. But the other was even more alarming. It has been said already that it was *not* a pure matter of accident that she had visited this particular shop. In reality, that nursery maid of whom some mention has been made above, and in terms expressing the suspicion with which even then I regarded her, had persuaded her into going thither by some representations which Agnes had

already ascertained to be altogether unwarranted. Other presumptions against this girl's fidelity crowded dimly upon my wife's mind at the very moment of finding her eyes thus suddenly opened ; and it was not till five minutes after her first examination, and in fact five minutes after it had ceased to be of use to her, that she remembered another circumstance, which now, when combined with the sequel, told its own tale. The muff had been missed some little time before the 6th of April. Search had been made for it ; but, the particular occasion which required it having passed off, this search was laid aside for the present, in the expectation that it would soon reappear in some corner of the house before it was wanted. Then came the sunny day, which made it no longer useful, and would perhaps have dismissed it entirely from the recollection of all parties, until it was now brought back in this memorable way. The name of my wife was embroidered within, upon the lining ; and it thus became a serviceable link to the hellish cabal against her. Upon reviewing the circumstances from first to last, upon recalling the manner of the girl at the time when the muff was missed, and upon combining the whole with her recent deception, by which she had misled her poor mistress into visiting this shop, Agnes began to see the entire truth as to this servant's wicked collusion with Barratt, though perhaps it might be too much to suppose her aware of the unhappy result to which her collusion tended. All this she saw at a glance when it was too late ; for her first examination was over. This girl, I must add, had left our house during my illness ; and she had afterwards a melancholy end.

One thing surprised me in all this. Barratt's purpose must manifestly have been to create merely a terror in my poor wife's mind, and to stop short of any legal consequences, in order to profit of that panic and confusion for extorting compliances with his hideous pretensions. It perplexed me, therefore, that he did not appear to have pursued this, manifestly his primary, purpose, the other being merely a mask to conceal his true ends and also (as he fancied) a means for effecting them. In this, however, I had soon occasion to find that I was deceived. He had, but without the know-

ledge of Agnes, taken such steps as were then open to him for making overtures to her with regard to the terms upon which he would agree to defeat the charge against her by failing to appear. But the law had travelled too fast for him and too determinately; so that, by the time he supposed terror to have operated sufficiently in favour of his views, it had already become unsafe to venture upon such explicit proposals as he would otherwise have tried. His own safety was now at stake, and would have been compromised by any open or written avowal of the motives on which he had been all along acting. In fact, at this time he was foiled by the agent in whom he confided; but much more he had been confounded upon another point — the prodigious interest manifested by the public. Thus it seems that, whilst he meditated only a snare for my poor Agnes, he had prepared one for himself, and finally, to evade the suspicions which began to arise powerfully as to his true motives, and thus to stave off his own ruin, had found himself in a manner obliged to go forward and consummate the ruin of another.

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The state of Agnes, as to health and bodily strength, was now becoming such that I was forcibly warned—whatsoever I meditated doing, to do quickly. There was this urgent reason for alarm: once conveyed into that region of the prison in which sentences like hers were executed, it became hopeless that I could communicate with her again. All intercourse whatsoever, and with whomsoever, was then placed under the most rigorous interdict; and the alarming circumstance was, that this transfer was governed by no settled rules, but might take place at any hour, and would certainly be precipitated by the slightest violence on my part, the slightest indiscretion, or the slightest argument for suspicion. Hard, indeed, was the part I had to play; for it was indispensable that I should appear calm and tranquil, in order to disarm suspicions around me, whilst continually contemplating the possibility that I myself might be summoned to extremities which I could not so much as trust myself to name or distinctly to conceive. But thus stood the case:—The government, it was understood, angered by

the public opposition, resolute for the triumph of what they called "principle," had settled finally that the sentence should be carried into execution. Now, that she, that my Agnes, being the frail wreck that she had become, could have stood one week of this sentence practically and literally enforced, was a mere chimera. A few hours, probably, of the experiment would have settled that question by dismissing her to the death she longed for; but, because the suffering would be short, was I to stand by and to witness the degradation, the pollution, attempted to be fastened upon her? What! to know that her beautiful tresses would be shorn ignominiously—a felon's dress forced upon her—a vile taskmaster, with authority to—— Blistered be the tongue that could go on to utter, in connexion with her innocent name, the vile dishonours which were to settle upon her person! I, however, and her brother had taken such resolutions that this result was one barely possible; and yet I sickened (yes, literally I many times experienced the effect of physical sickness) at contemplating our own utter childish helplessness, and recollecting that every night during our seclusion from the prison the last irreversible step might be taken, and in the morning we might find a solitary cell, and the angel form that had illuminated it gone where we could not follow, and leaving behind her the certainty that we should see her no more. Every night, at the hour of locking up, *she*, at least, manifestly had a fear that she saw us for the last time. She put her arms feebly about my neck, sobbed convulsively, and, I believe, guessed —but, if really so, did not much reprove or quarrel with— the desperate purposes which I struggled with in regard to her own life. One thing was quite evident—that to the peace of her latter days, now hurrying to their close, it was indispensable that she should pass them undivided from me; and possibly, as was afterwards alleged, when it became easy to allege anything, some relenting did take place in high quarters at this time; for, upon some medical reports made just now, a most seasonable indulgence was granted, viz. that Hannah was permitted to attend her mistress constantly; and it was also felt as a great alleviation of the horrors belonging to this prison that candles were now

allowed throughout the nights. But I was warned privately that these indulgences were with no consent from the police minister, and that circumstances might soon withdraw the momentary intercession by which we profited. With this knowledge, we could not linger in our preparations. We had resolved upon accomplishing an escape for Agnes, at whatever risk or price. The main difficulty was her own extreme feebleness, which might forbid her to co-operate with us in any degree at the critical moment; and the main danger was delay. We pushed forward, therefore, in our attempts with prodigious energy, and I, for my part, with an energy like that of insanity.

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The first attempt we made was upon the fidelity to his trust of the chief jailer. He was a coarse, vulgar man, brutal in his manners, but with vestiges of generosity in his character, though damaged a good deal by his daily associates. Him we invited to a meeting at a tavern in the neighbourhood of the prison, disguising our names as too certain to betray our objects, and baiting our invitation with some hints which we had ascertained were likely to prove temptations under his immediate circumstances. He had a graceless young son whom he was most anxious to wean from his dissolute connexions, and to steady, by placing him in some office of no great responsibility. Upon this knowledge we framed the terms of our invitation.

These proved to be effectual as regarded our immediate object of obtaining an interview of persuasion. The night was wet; and at seven o'clock, the hour fixed for the interview, we were seated in readiness, much perplexed to know whether he would take any notice of our invitation. We had waited three-quarters of an hour, when we heard a heavy, lumbering step ascending the stair. The door was thrown open to its widest extent, and in the centre of the doorway stood a short, stout-built man, and the very broadest I ever beheld, staring at us with bold, inquiring eyes. His salutation was something to this effect:—

"What the hell do you gay fellows want with me? What the blazes is this humbugging letter about? My son, and be hanged! What do you know of my son?"

Upon this overture we ventured to request that he would come in and suffer us to shut the door, which we also locked. Next we produced the official paper nominating his son to a small place in the customs—not yielding much, it was true, in the way of salary, but fortunately, and in accordance with the known wishes of the father, unburdened with any dangerous trust.

"Well, I suppose I must say thank ye ; but what comes next? What am I to do to pay the damages?" We informed him that for this particular little service we asked no return.

"No, no," said he ; "that'll not go down ; that cat'll not jump. I'm not green enough for that. So say away—what's the damage?" We then explained that we had certainly a favour, and a great one, to ask ("Ay, I'll be bound you have," was his parenthesis), but that for this we were prepared to offer a separate remuneration ; repeating, that, with respect to the little place procured for his son, it had not cost us anything ; and therefore we did really and sincerely decline to receive anything in return, satisfied that by this little offering we had procured the opportunity of this present interview. At this point we withdrew a covering from the table, upon which we had previously arranged a heap of gold coins, amounting in value to twelve hundred English guineas—this being the entire sum which circumstances allowed us to raise on so sudden a warning ; for some landed property that we both had was so settled and limited that we could not convert it into money, either by way of sale, loan, or mortgage. This sum, stating to him its exact amount, we offered to his acceptance, upon the single condition that he would look aside, or wink hard, or (in whatever way he chose to express it) would make, or suffer to be made, such facilities for our liberating a female prisoner as we would point out. He mused : full five minutes he sat deliberating without opening his lips. At length he shocked us by saying, in a firm, decisive tone, that left us little hope of altering his resolution, "No : gentlemen, it's a very fair offer, and a good deal of money for a single prisoner. I think I can guess at the person. It's a fair offer—fair enough ; but, bless your heart ! if I were

to do the thing you want,—why, perhaps another case might be overlooked. But this prisoner,—no; there's too much depending. No; they would turn me out of my place. Now, the place is worth more to me in the long run than what you offer; though you bid fair enough, if it were only for my time in it. But look here: in case I can get my son to come into harness, I'm expecting to get the office for him after I've retired. So I can't do it. But I'll tell you what: you've been kind to my son; and therefore I'll not say a word about it. You're safe for me. And so good-night to you." Saying which, and standing no further question, he walked resolutely out of the room and downstairs.

Two days we mourned over this failure, and scarcely knew which way to turn for another ray of hope. On the third morning we received intelligence that this very jailer had been attacked by the fever, which, after long desolating the city, had at length made its way into the prison. In a very few days the jailer was lying without hope of recovery; and, of necessity, another person was appointed to fill his station for the present. This person I had seen, and I liked him less by much than the one he succeeded. He had an Italian appearance, and he wore an air of Italian subtlety and dissimulation. I was surprised to find, on proposing the same service to him, and on the same terms, that he made no objection whatever, but closed instantly with my offers. In prudence, however, I had made this change in the articles: a sum equal to two hundred English guineas, or one sixth part of the whole money, he was to receive beforehand as a retaining fee; but the remainder was to be paid only to himself, or to anybody of his appointing, at the very moment of our finding the prison gates thrown open to us. He spoke fairly enough, and seemed to meditate no treachery; nor was there any obvious or known interest to serve by treachery; and yet I doubted him grievously.

The night came. It was chosen as a gala night, one of two nights throughout the year in which the prisoners were allowed to celebrate a great national event; and, in those days of relaxed prison management, the utmost licence was allowed to the rejoicing. This indulgence was extended to prisoners of all classes, though, of course, under more restric-

tions with regard to the criminal class. Ten o'clock came—the hour at which we had been instructed to hold ourselves in readiness. We had been long prepared. Agnes had been dressed by Hannah in such a costume externally (a man's hat and cloak, &c.) that, from her height, she might easily have passed amongst a mob of masquerading figures in the debtors' halls and galleries for a young stripling. Pierpoint and myself were also to a certain degree disguised; so far, at least, that we should not have been recognized at any hurried glance by those of the prison officers who had become acquainted with our persons. We were all more or less disguised about the face; and in that age, when masks were commonly used at all hours by people of a certain rank, there would have been nothing suspicious in any possible costume of the kind in a night like this, if we could succeed in passing for friends of debtors.

I am impatient of these details; and I hasten over the ground. One entire hour passed away, and no jailer appeared. We began to despond heavily; and Agnes, poor thing! was now the most agitated of us all. At length eleven struck in the harsh tones of the prison clock. A few minutes after we heard the sound of bolts drawing and bars unfastening. The jailer entered—drunk, and much disposed to be insolent. I thought it advisable to give him another bribe, and he resumed the fawning insinuation of his manner. He now directed us, by passages which he pointed out, to gain the other side of the prison. There we were to mix with the debtors and their mob of friends, and to await his joining us, which in that crowd he could do without much suspicion. He wished us to traverse the passages separately; but this was impossible, for it was necessary that one of us should support Agnes on each side. I previously persuaded her to take a small quantity of brandy, which we rejoiced to see had given her, at this moment of starting, a most seasonable strength and animation. The gloomy passages were more than usually empty; for all the turnkeys were employed in a vigilant custody of the gates and examination of the parties going out. So the jailer had told us; and the news alarmed us. We came at length to a turning which brought us in sight of a strong iron gate that divided the two main quarters of

the prison. For this we had not been prepared. The man, however, opened the gate without a word spoken, only putting out his hand for a fee; and in my joy, perhaps, I gave him one imprudently large. After passing this gate, the distant uproar of the debtors guided us to the scene of their merriment; and, when there, such was the tumult and the vast multitude assembled that we now hoped in good earnest to accomplish our purpose without accident. Just at this moment the jailer appeared in the distance: he seemed looking towards us; and at length one of our party could distinguish that he was beckoning to us. We went forward, and found him in some agitation, real or counterfeit. He muttered a word or two quite unintelligible about the man at the wicket; told us we must wait a while, and he would then see what could be done for us. We were beginning to demur and to express the suspicions which now too seriously arose, when he, seeing, or affecting to see, some object of alarm, pushed us with a hurried movement into a cell opening upon the part of the gallery at which we were now standing. Not knowing whether we really might not be retreating from some danger, we could do no otherwise than comply with his signals; but we were troubled at finding ourselves immediately locked in from the outside, and thus apparently all our motions had only sufficed to exchange one prison for another.

We were now completely in the dark, and found, by a hard breathing from one corner of the little dormitory, that it was not unoccupied. Having taken care to provide ourselves separately with means for striking a light, we soon had more than one torch burning. The brilliant light, falling upon the eyes of a man who lay stretched on the iron bedstead, woke him. It proved to be my friend the under jailer, Ratcliffe, but no longer holding any office in the prison. He sprang up, and a rapid explanation took place. He had become a prisoner for debt; and on this evening, after having caroused through the day with some friends from the country, had retired at an early hour to sleep away his intoxication. I, on my part, thought it prudent to entrust him unreservedly with our situation and purposes, not omitting our gloomy suspicions. Ratcliffe looked, with

a pity that won my love, upon the poor wasted Agnes. He had seen her on her first entrance into the prison, had spoken to her, and therefore knew *from* what she had fallen, *to* what. Even then he had felt for her; how much more at this time, when he beheld, by the fierce light of the torches, her woe-worn features!

"Who was it," he asked eagerly, "you made the bargain with? Manasseh?"

"The same."

"Then I can tell you this: not a greater villain walks the earth. He is a Jew from Portugal; he has betrayed many a man, and will many another, unless he gets his own neck stretched; which might happen, if I told all I know."

"But what was it probable that this man meditated? Or how could it profit him to betray us?"

"That's more than I can tell. He wants to get your money; and that he doesn't know how to bring about without doing his part. But that's what he never *will* do, take my word for it. That would cut him out of all chance for the head jailer's place." He mused a little, and then told us that he could himself put us outside the prison walls, and *would* do it without fee or reward. "But we must be quiet, or that devil will bethink him of me. I'll wager something he thought that I was out merrymaking like the rest; and, if he should chance to light upon the truth, he'll be back in no time." Ratcliffe then removed an old fire grate, at the back of which was an iron plate, that swung round into a similar fireplace in the contiguous cell. From that, by a removal of a few slight obstacles, we passed, by a long avenue, into the chapel. Then he left us, whilst he went out alone to reconnoitre his ground. Agnes was now in so pitiable a condition of weakness, as we stood on the very brink of our final effort, that we placed her in a pew, where she could rest as upon a sofa. Previously we had stood upon graves, and with monuments more or less conspicuous all around us—some raised by friends to the memory of friends, some by subscriptions in the prison, some by children who had risen into prosperity to the memory of a father, brother, or other relative who had died

in captivity. I was grieved that these sad memorials should meet the eye of my wife at this moment of awe and terrific anxiety. Pierpoint and I were well armed, and all of us determined not to suffer a recapture, now that we were free of the crowds that made resistance hopeless. This Agnes easily perceived ; and *that*, by suggesting a bloody arbitration, did not lessen her agitation. I hoped therefore that, by placing her in the pew, I might at least liberate her for the moment from the besetting memorials of sorrow and calamity. But, as if in the very teeth of my purpose, one of the large columns which supported the roof of the chapel had its basis and lower part of the shaft in this very pew. On the side of it, and just facing her as she lay reclining on the cushions, appeared a mural tablet, with a bas-relief in white marble, to the memory of two children, twins, who had lived and died at the same time, and in this prison—children who had never breathed another air than that of captivity, their parents having passed many years within these walls under confinement for debt. The sculptures were not remarkable, being a trite, but not the less affecting, representation of angels descending to receive the infants ; but the hallowed words of the inscription, distinct and legible,—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God,"—met her eye, and, by the thoughts they awakened, made me fear that she would become unequal to the exertions which yet awaited her. At this moment Ratcliffe returned and informed us that all was right, and that, from the ruinous state of all the buildings which surrounded the chapel, no difficulty remained for us, who were, in fact, beyond the strong part of the prison, excepting at a single door, which we should be obliged to break down. But had we any means arranged for pursuing our flight, and turning this escape to account, when out of confinement ? All that, I assured him, was provided for long ago. We proceeded, and soon reached the door. We had one crowbar amongst us, but beyond that had no better weapons than the loose stones found about some new-made graves in the chapel. Ratcliffe and Pierpoint, both powerful men, applied themselves by turns to the door, whilst Hannah and I supported Agnes. The door did not yield, being of enormous strength ;

but the wall did, and a large mass of stonework fell outwards, twisting the door aside ; so that, by afterwards working with our hands, we removed stones many enough to admit of our egress. Unfortunately this aperture was high above the ground, and it was necessary to climb over a huge heap of loose rubbish in order to profit by it. My brother-in-law passed first, in order to receive my wife, quite helpless at surmounting the obstacle by her own efforts, out of my arms. He had gone through the opening, and, turning round so as to face me, he naturally could see something that I did *not* see. "Look behind!" he called out rapidly. I did so, and saw the murderous villain Manasseh, with his arm uplifted, and in the act of cutting at my wife, nearly insensible as she was, with a cutlass. The blow was not for me, but for her, as the fugitive prisoner ; and the law would have borne him out in the act. I saw, I comprehended, the whole. I groped, as far as I could without letting my wife drop, for my pistols ; but all that I could do would have been unavailing and too late—she would have been murdered in my arms. But—and that was what none of us saw, neither I, nor Pierpoint, nor the hound Manasseh—one person stood back in the shade; one person had seen, but had not uttered a word on seeing, Manasseh advancing through the shades ; one person only had forecast the exact succession of all that was coming. Me she saw embarrassed and my hands pre-occupied, Pierpoint and Ratcliffe useless by position, and the gleam of the dog's eye directed her to his aim. The crowbar was leaning against the shattered wall. This she had silently seized. One blow knocked up the sword ; a second laid the villain prostrate. At this moment appeared another of the turnkeys advancing from the rear ; for the noise of our assault upon the door had drawn attention in the interior of the prison, from which, however, no great number of assistants could on this dangerous night venture to absent themselves. What followed for the next few minutes hurried onwards, incident crowding upon incident, like the motions of a dream. Manasseh, lying on the ground, yelled out, "The bell! the bell!" to him who followed. The man understood, and made for the belfry door attached to the chapel ; upon which Pierpoint drew a pistol, and sent the

bullet whizzing past his ear so truly that fear made the man obedient to the counter-orders of Pierpoint for the moment. He paused and awaited the issue. In a moment all had cleared the wall, traversed the waste ground beyond it, lifted Agnes over the low railing, shaken hands with our benefactor Ratcliffe, and pushed onwards as rapidly as we were able to the little dark lane, a quarter of a mile distant, where had stood waiting for the last two hours a chaise-and-four.

[Ratcliffe, before my story closes, I will pursue to the last of my acquaintance with him, according to the just claims of his services. He had privately whispered to me, as we went along, that he could speak to the innocence of that lady, pointing to my wife, better than anybody. He was the person whom (as then holding an office in the prison) Barratt had attempted to employ as agent in conveying any messages that he found it safe to send—obscurely hinting the terms on which he would desist from prosecution. Ratcliffe had at first undertaken the negotiation from mere levity of character; but, when the story and the public interest spread, and after himself becoming deeply struck by the prisoner's affliction, beauty, and reputed innocence, he had pursued it only as a means of entrapping Barratt into such written communications and such private confessions of the truth as might have served Agnes effectually. He wanted the art, however, to disguise his purposes. Barratt came to suspect him violently, and feared his evidence so far, even for those imperfect and merely oral overtures which he had really sent through Ratcliffe, that, on the very day of the trial, he, as was believed, though by another nominally, contrived that Ratcliffe should be arrested for debt, and, after harassing him with intricate forms of business, had finally caused him to be conveyed to prison. Ratcliffe was thus involved in his own troubles at the time, and afterwards supposed that, without written documents to support his evidence, he could not be of much service to the re-establishment of my wife's reputation. Six months after his services in the night escape from the prison I saw him, and pressed him to take the money so justly forfeited to him by Manasseh's perfidy. He would, however, be persuaded to take no more than paid his

debts. A second and a third time his debts were paid by myself and Pierpoint. But the same habits of intemperance and dissolute pleasure which led him into these debts finally ruined his constitution; and he died, though otherwise of a fine, generous, manly nature, a martyr to dissipation, at the early age of twenty-nine. With respect to his prison confinement, it was so frequently recurring in his life, and was alleviated by so many indulgences, that he scarcely viewed it as a hardship. Having once been an officer of the prison, and having thus formed connexions with the whole official establishment, and done services to many of them, and being of so convivial a turn, he was, even as a prisoner, treated with distinction, and considered as a privileged son of the house.]

It was just striking twelve o'clock as we entered the lane where the carriage was drawn up. Rain, about the profoundest I had ever witnessed, was falling. Though near to midsummer, the night had been unusually dark to begin with, and, from the increasing rain, had become much more so. We could see nothing; and at first we feared that some mistake had occurred as to the station of the carriage—in which case we might have sought for it vainly through the intricate labyrinth of the streets in that quarter. I first descried it by the light of a torch, reflected powerfully from the large eyes of the leaders. All was ready; horse-keepers were at the horses' heads; the postilions were mounted; each door had the steps let down; Agnes was lifted in; Hannah and I followed; Pierpoint mounted his horse; and at the word,—O, how strange a word!—"*All's right!*" the horses sprang off like leopards, a manner ill suited to the slippery pavement of a narrow street. At that moment, but we valued it little indeed, we heard the prison bell ringing out loud and clear. Thrice within the first three minutes we had to pull up suddenly, on the brink of formidable accidents, from the dangerous speed we maintained, and which, nevertheless, the driver had orders to maintain, as essential to our plan. All the stoppages and hindrances of every kind along the road had been anticipated previously, and met by contrivance of one kind or other; and Pierpoint was constantly a little ahead of us, to attend to anything that had been neglected.

The consequence of these arrangements was that no person along the road could possibly have assisted to trace us by anything in our appearance; for we passed all objects at too flying a pace, and through darkness too profound, to allow of any one feature in our equipage being distinctly noticed. Ten miles out of town, a space which we traversed in forty-four minutes, a second relay of horses was ready; but we carried on the same postilions throughout. Six miles ahead of this distance we had a second relay; and with this set of horses, after pushing two miles farther along the road, we crossed by a miserable lane five miles long, scarcely even a bridge road, into another of the great roads from the capital; and, by thus crossing the country, we came back upon the city at a point far distant from that at which we left it. We had performed a distance of forty-two miles in three hours, and lost a fourth hour upon the wretched five miles of cross road. It was, therefore, four o'clock, and broad daylight, when we drew near the suburbs of the city. But a most happy accident now favoured us: a fog the most intense now prevailed: nobody could see an object six feet distant. We alighted in an uninhabited new-built street, plunged into the fog, thus confounding our traces to an observer. We then stepped into a hackney coach which had been stationed at a little distance. Thence, according to our plan, we drove to a miserable quarter of the town, whither the poor only and the wretched resorted, mounted a gloomy, dirty staircase, and, befriended by the fog, still growing thicker and thicker, and by the early hour of the morning, reached a house previously hired, which, if shocking to the eye and the imagination from its squalid appearance and its gloom, still was a home, a sanctuary, an asylum from treachery, from captivity, from persecution. Here Pierpoint for the present quitted us; and once more Agnes, Hannah, and I, the shattered members of a shattered family, were thus gathered together in a house of our own.

Yes; once again, daughter of the hills, thou sleptest as heretofore in my encircling arms; but not again in that peace which crowned thy innocence in those days, and should have crowned it now. Through the whole of our flying journey, in some circumstances at its outset strikingly recalling to me

that blessed one which followed our marriage, Agnes slept away, unconscious of our movements. She slept through all that day and the following night; and I watched over her with as much jealousy of all that might disturb her as a mother watches over her new-born baby; for I hoped, I fancied, that a long, long rest, a rest, a halcyon calm, a deep, deep Sabbath of security, might prove healing and medicinal. I thought wrong: her breathing became more disturbed, and sleep was now haunted by dreams; all of us, indeed, were agitated by dreams. The past pursued me, and the present, for high rewards had been advertised by government to those who traced us; and, though for the moment we were secure, because we never went abroad, and could not have been naturally sought in such a neighbourhood, still that very circumstance would eventually operate against us. At length every night I dreamed of our insecurity under a thousand forms; but more often by far my dreams turned upon our wrongs; wrath moved me rather than fear. Every night, for the greater part, I lay painfully and elaborately involved, by deep sense of wrong,—

> "—— in long orations, which I pleaded
> Before unjust tribunals."[1]

And, for poor Agnes, her also did the remembrance of mighty wrongs occupy through vast worlds of sleep in the same way, though coloured by that tenderness which belonged to her gentler nature. One dream in particular—a dream of sublime circumstances—she repeated to me so movingly, with a pathos so thrilling, that by some profound sympathy it transplanted itself to my own sleep, settled itself there, and is to this hour a part of the fixed dream scenery which revolves at intervals through my sleeping life. This it was: She would hear a trumpet sound—though perhaps as having been the prelude to the solemn entry of the judges at a town which she had once visited in her childhood; other preparations would follow; and at last all the solemnities of a great trial would shape themselves and fall into settled images. The audience was assembled, the judges were arrayed, the court was set. The prisoner was cited. Inquest was made,

[1] From a manuscript poem of a great living poet.

witnesses were called ; and false witnesses came tumultuously to the bar. Then again a trumpet was heard, but the trumpet of a mighty archangel ; and then would roll away thick clouds and vapours. Again the audience, but another audience, was assembled ; again the tribunal was established ; again the court was set ; but a tribunal and a court how different to her ! *That* had been composed of men seeking indeed for truth, but themselves erring and fallible creatures ; the witnesses had been full of lies, the judges of darkness. But here was a court composed of heavenly witnesses—here was a righteous tribunal ; and then, at last, a judge that could not be deceived. The judge smote with his eye a person who sought to hide himself in the crowd ; the guilty man stepped forward ; the poor prisoner was called up to the presence of the mighty judge. Suddenly the voice of a little child was heard ascending before her. Then the trumpet sounded once again ; and then there were new heavens and a new earth ; and her tears and her agitation (for she had seen her little Francis) awoke the poor palpitating dreamer.

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Two months passed on : nothing could possibly be done materially to raise the standard of those wretched accommodations which the house offered. The dilapidated walls, the mouldering plaster, the blackened mantelpieces, the stained and polluted wainscots,—what could be attempted to hide or to repair all this by those who durst not venture abroad ? Yet, whatever could be done, Hannah did ; and, in the meantime, very soon indeed my Agnes ceased to see or to be offended by these objects. First of all her sight went from her ; and nothing which appealed to that sense could ever more offend her. It is to me the one only consolation I have, that my presence and that of Hannah, with such innocent frauds as we concerted together, made her latter days pass in a heavenly calm, by persuading her that our security was absolute, and that all search after us had ceased, under a belief on the part of government that we had gained the shelter of a foreign land. All this was a delusion ; but it was a delusion, blessed be Heaven ! which lasted exactly as long as her life, and was just commensurate with its necessity. I hurry over the final circumstances.

There was fortunately now, even for me, no fear that the hand of any policeman or emissary of justice could effectually disturb the latter days of my wife ; for, besides pistols always lying loaded in an inner room, there happened to be a long, narrow passage on entering the house, which, by means of a blunderbuss, I could have swept effectually and cleared many times over ; and I knew what to do in a last extremity. Just two months it was, to a day, since we had entered the house ; and it happened that the medical attendant upon Agnes, who awakened no suspicion by his visits, had prescribed some opiate or anodyne which had not come. Being dark early, for it was now September, I had ventured out to fetch it. In this I conceived there could be no danger. On my return, I saw a man examining the fastenings of the door. He made no opposition to my entrance, nor seemed much to observe it ; but I was disturbed. Two hours after, both Hannah and I heard a noise about the door and voices in low conversation. It is remarkable that Agnes heard this also, so quick had grown her hearing. She was agitated, but was easily calmed ; and at ten o'clock we were all in bed. The hand of Agnes was in mine—so only she felt herself in security. She had been restless for an hour, and talking at intervals in sleep. Once she certainly wakened ; for she pressed her lips to mine. Two minutes after I heard something in her breathing which did not please me. I rose hastily—brought a light—raised her head. Two long, long, gentle sighs, that scarcely moved the lips, were all that could be perceived. At that moment, at that very moment, Hannah called out to me that the door was surrounded. "Open it!" I said. Six men entered. Agnes it was they sought. I pointed to the bed. They advanced, gazed, and walked away in silence.

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After this I wandered about, caring little for life or its affairs, and roused only at times to think of vengeance upon all who had contributed to lay waste my happiness. In this pursuit, however, I was confounded as much by my own thoughts as by the difficulties of accomplishing my purpose. To assault and murder either of the two principal agents in this tragedy,—what would it be, what other effect could it

have, than to invest them with the character of injured and suffering people, and thus to attract a pity or a forgiveness at least to their persons which never otherwise could have illustrated their deaths? I remembered, indeed, the words of a sea captain who had taken such vengeance as had offered at the moment upon his bitter enemy and persecutor (a young passenger on board his ship), who had informed against him at the custom house on his arrival in port, and had thus effected the confiscation of his ship and the ruin of the captain's family. The vengeance—and it was all that circumstances allowed—consisted in coming behind the young man clandestinely and pushing him into the deep waters of the dock, when, being unable to swim, he perished by drowning. "And the like," said the captain, when musing on his trivial vengeance,—"and the like happens to many an honest sailor." Yes, thought I, the captain was right. The momentary shock of a pistol bullet,—what is it? Perhaps it may save the wretch, after all, from the pangs of some lingering disease; and then, again, I shall have the character of a murderer, if known to have shot him. He will with many people have no such character, but, at worst, the character of a man too harsh (they will say), and possibly mistaken in protecting his property. And then, if not known as the man who shot him, where is the shadow even of vengeance? Strange it seemed to me, and passing strange, that I should be the person to urge arguments in behalf of letting this man escape; for at one time I had as certainly, as inexorably, doomed him as ever I took any resolution in my life. But the fact is, and I began to see it upon closer view, it is not easy by any means to take an adequate vengeance for any injury beyond a very trivial standard; and that, with common magnanimity, one does not care to avenge. Whilst I was in this mood of mind, still debating with myself whether I should or should not contaminate my hands with the blood of this monster, and still unable to shut my eyes upon one fact,—viz. that my buried Agnes would above all things have urged me to abstain from such acts of violence, too evidently useless,—listlessly, and scarcely knowing what I was in quest of, I strayed by accident into a church, where a venerable old man was preaching at the very moment I entered. He

was either delivering as a text, or repeating in the course of his sermon, these words : "Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord." By some accident, also, he fixed his eyes upon me at the moment ; and this concurrence with the subject then occupying my thoughts so much impressed me that I determined very seriously to review my half-formed purposes of revenge. And well it was that I did so ; for in that same week an explosion of popular fury brought the life of this wretched Barratt to a shocking termination, pretty much resembling the fate of the De Witts in Holland ; and the consequences to me were such, and so full of all the consolation and indemnification which this world could give me, that I have often shuddered since then at the narrow escape I had had from myself intercepting this remarkable retribution. The villain had again been attempting to play off the same hellish scheme with a beautiful young rustic which had succeeded in the case of my ill-fated Agnes ; but the young woman in this instance had a high, and in fact termagant, spirit. Rustic as she was, she had been warned of the character of the man ; everybody, in fact, was familiar with the recent tragedy. Either her lover or her brother happened to be waiting for her outside the window. He saw, in part, the very tricks in the act of perpetration by which some article or other, meant to be claimed as stolen property, was conveyed into a parcel she had incautiously laid down. He heard the charge against her made by Barratt and seconded by his creatures, heard her appeal, sprang to her aid, dragged the ruffian into the street, when, in less time than the tale could be told, and before the police (though tolerably alert) could effectually interpose for his rescue, the mob had so used or so abused the opportunity they had long wished for that he remained the mere disfigured wreck of what had once been a man, rather than a creature with any resemblance to humanity. I myself heard the uproar at a distance and the shouts and yells of savage exultation : they were sounds I shall never forget, though I did not at that time know them for what they were or understand their meaning. The result, however, to me was something beyond this, and worthy to have been purchased with my heart's blood. Barratt still breathed ; spite of his mutilations, he could

speak ; he was rational. One only thing he demanded—it was that his dying confession might be taken. Two magistrates and a clergyman attended. He gave a list of those whom he had trepanned, and had failed to trepan, by his artifices and threats, into the sacrifice of their honour. He expired before the record was closed, but not before he had placed my wife's name in the latter list as the one whose injuries in his dying moments most appalled him. This confession on the following day went into the hands of the hostile minister ; and my revenge was perfect.

THE AVENGER[1]

"Why callest thou me murderer, and not rather the wrath of God burning after the steps of the oppressor, and cleansing the earth when it is wet with blood?"

THAT series of terrific events by which our quiet city and university in the north-eastern quarter of Germany were convulsed during the year 1816 has in itself, and considered merely as a blind movement of human tiger-passion ranging unchained amongst men, something too memorable to be forgotten or left without its own separate record; but the moral lesson impressed by these events is yet more memorable, and deserves the deep attention of coming generations in their struggle after human improvement, not merely in its own limited field of interest directly awakened, but in all analogous fields of interest; as in fact already, and more than once, in connexion with these very events, *this lesson has* obtained the effectual attention of Christian kings and Princes assembled in Congress. No tragedy, indeed, amongst all the sad ones by which the charities of the human heart or of the fireside have ever been outraged, can better merit a separate chapter in the private history of German manners or social life than this unparalleled case. And, on the other hand, no one can put in a better claim to be the historian than myself.

I was at the time, and still am, a Professor in that city

[1] From *Blackwood's Magazine* for August 1838. It was not overtaken by De Quincey in his Collective Edition of his writings, but appeared in vol. xvi of Messrs. Black's reissue of that edition, with the statement that it was from *Blackwood*, but "with a few corrections by the author." It had the benefit, therefore, of De Quincey's own revision.—M.

and university which had the melancholy distinction of being its theatre. I knew familiarly all the parties who were concerned in it—either as sufferers or as agents. I was present from first to last, and watched the whole course of the mysterious storm which fell upon our devoted city in a strength like that of a West Indian hurricane, and which did seriously threaten at one time to depopulate our university, through the dark suspicions which settled upon its members, and the natural reaction of generous indignation in repelling them—whilst the city in its more stationary and native classes would very soon have manifested *their* awful sense of things, of the hideous insecurity for life, and of the unfathomable dangers which had undermined their hearths below their very feet, by sacrificing, whenever circumstances allowed them, their houses and beautiful gardens in exchange for days uncursed by panic, and nights unpolluted by blood. Nothing, I can take upon myself to assert, was left undone of all that human foresight could suggest, or human ingenuity could accomplish. But observe the melancholy result; the more certain did these arrangements strike people as remedies for the evil, so much the more effectually did they aid the terror, but above all, the awe—the sense of mystery, when ten cases of total extermination, applied to separate households, had occurred, in every one of which these precautionary aids had failed to yield the slightest assistance. The horror, the perfect frenzy of fear, which seized upon the town after that experience, baffles all attempt at description. Had these various contrivances failed merely in some human and intelligible way, as by bringing the aid too tardily—still in such cases, though the danger would no less have been evidently deepened, nobody would have felt any further mystery than what, from the very first, rested upon the persons and the motives of the murderers. But, as it was, when in ten separate cases of exterminating carnage, the astounded police, after an examination the most searching, pursued from day to day, and almost exhausting the patience by the minuteness of the investigation, had finally pronounced that no attempt apparently had been made to benefit by any of the signals preconcerted, that no footstep

apparently had moved in that direction—then, and after that result, a blind misery of fear fell upon the population, so much the worse than any anguish of a beleaguered city that is awaiting the storming fury of a victorious enemy, by how much the shadowy—the uncertain—the infinite—is at all times more potent in mastering the mind than a danger that is known—measurable—palpable—and human. The very police, instead of offering protection or encouragement, were seized with terror for themselves. And the general feeling, as it was described to me by a grave citizen whom I met in a morning walk (for the overmastering sense of a public calamity broke down every barrier of reserve, and all men talked freely to all men in the streets, as they would have done during the rockings of an earthquake), was, even amongst the boldest, like that which sometimes takes possession of the mind in dreams—when one feels one's-self sleeping alone, utterly divided from all call or hearing of friends, doors open that should be shut, or unlocked that should be triply secured, the very walls gone, barriers swallowed up by unknown abysses, nothing around one but frail curtains, and a world of illimitable night, whisperings at a distance, correspondence going on between darkness and darkness, like one deep calling to another, and the dreamer's own heart the centre from which the whole network of this unimaginable chaos radiates, by means of which the blank *privations* of silence and darkness become powers the most *positive* and awful.

Agencies of fear, as of any other passion, and above all of passion felt in communion with thousands, and in which the heart beats in conscious sympathy with an entire city, through all its regions of high and low, young and old, strong and weak ; such agencies avail to raise and transfigure the natures of men ; mean minds become elevated ; dull men become eloquent ; and, when matters came to this crisis, the public feeling, as made known by voice, gesture, manner, or words, was such that no stranger could represent it to his fancy. In that respect, therefore, I had an advantage, being upon the spot through the whole course of the affair, for giving a faithful narrative ; as I had still more eminently, from the sort of central station which I occupied, with

respect to all the movements of the case. I may add that I had another advantage, not possessed, or not in the same degree, by any other inhabitant of the town. I was personally acquainted with every family of the slightest account belonging to the resident population; whether amongst the old local gentry, or the new settlers whom the late wars had driven to take refuge within our walls.

It was in September 1815 that I received a letter from the Chief Secretary to the Prince of M——, a nobleman connected with the diplomacy of Russia, from which I quote an extract:—"I wish, in short, to recommend to your attentions, and in terms stronger than I know how to devise, a young man on whose behalf the Czar himself is privately known to have expressed the very strongest interest. He was at the battle of Waterloo as an aide-de-camp to a Dutch general officer, and is decorated with distinctions won upon that awful day. However, though serving in that instance under English orders, and although an Englishman of rank, he does not belong to the English military service. He has served, young as he is, under *various* banners, and under ours, in particular, in the cavalry of our Imperial Guard. He is English by birth, nephew to the Earl of E., and heir-presumptive to his immense estates. There is a wild story current—that his mother was a gipsy of transcendent beauty, which may account for his somewhat Moorish complexion, though, after all, *that* is not of a deeper tinge than I have seen amongst many an Englishman. He is himself one of the noblest-looking of God's creatures. Both father and mother, however, are now dead; since then, he has become the favourite of his uncle, who detained him in England after the Emperor had departed; and, as this uncle is now in the last stage of infirmity, Mr. Wyndham's succession to the vast family estates is inevitable, and probably near at hand. Meantime, he is anxious for some assistance in his studies. Intellectually he stands in the very first rank of men, as I am sure you will not be slow to discover; but his long military service, and the unparalleled tumult of our European history since 1805, have interfered (as you may suppose) with the cultivation of his mind; for he entered the cavalry service of a German power when a mere boy, and shifted

about from service to service as the hurricane of war blew from this point or from that. During the French anabasis to Moscow he entered our service, made himself a prodigious favourite with the whole Imperial family, and even now is only in his twenty-second year. As to his accomplishments, they will speak for themselves; they are infinite, and applicable to every situation of life. Greek is what he wants from you; never ask about terms. He will acknowledge any trouble he may give you, as he acknowledges all trouble, *en prince*. And ten years hence you will look back with pride upon having contributed your part to the formation of one whom all here at St. Petersburg, not soldiers only, but we *diplomates*, look upon as certain to prove a great man, and a leader amongst the intellects of Christendom."

Two or three other letters followed; and at length it was arranged that Mr. Maximilian Wyndham should take up his residence at my monastic abode for one year. He was to keep a table, and an establishment of servants, at his own cost; was to have an apartment of some dozen or so of rooms; the unrestricted use of the library; with some other public privileges willingly conceded by the magistracy of the town: in return for all which he was to pay me a thousand guineas: and already beforehand, by way of acknowledgment for the public civilities of the town, he sent, through my hands, a contribution of three hundred guineas to the various local institutions for education of the poor, or for charity.

The Russian Secretary had latterly corresponded with me from a little German town not more than ninety miles distant: and, as he had special couriers at his service, the negotiation advanced so rapidly that all was closed before the end of September. And, when once that consummation was attained, I, that previously had breathed no syllable of what was stirring, now gave a loose to the interesting tidings, and suffered them to spread through the whole compass of the town. It will be easily imagined that such a story, already romantic enough in its first outline, would lose nothing in the telling. An Englishman to begin with,—which name of itself, and at all times, is a passport into German favour, but much more since the late memorable wars that, but for Englishmen, would have drooped into disconnected efforts—

next, an Englishman of rank and of the *haute noblesse*,—then a soldier covered with brilliant distinctions, and in the most brilliant arm of the service ; young, moreover, and yet a veteran by his experience,—fresh from the most awful battle of this planet since the day of Pharsalia,—radiant with the favour of courts and of Imperial ladies,—finally (which alone would have given him an interest in all female hearts), an Antinous of faultless beauty, a Grecian statue, as it were, into which the breath of life had been breathed by some modern Pygmalion,—such a pomp of gifts and endowments settling upon one man's head should not have required for its effect the vulgar consummation (and yet to many it *was* the consummation and crest of the whole) that he was reputed to be rich beyond the dreams of romance or the necessities of a fairy tale. Unparalleled was the impression made upon our stagnant society ; every tongue was busy in discussing the marvellous young Englishman from morning to night ; every female fancy was busy in depicting the personal appearance of this gay apparition.

On his arrival at my house, I became sensible of a truth which I had observed some years before. The commonplace maxim is—that it is dangerous to raise expectations too high. This, which is thus generally expressed, and without limitation, is true only conditionally ; it is true then and there only where there is but little merit to sustain and justify the expectation. But, in any case where the merit is transcendent of its kind, it is always useful to rack the expectation up to the highest point ; in anything which partakes of the infinite, the most unlimited expectations will find ample room for gratification ; whilst it is certain that ordinary observers, possessing little sensibility, unless where they have been warned to expect, will often fail to see what exists in the most conspicuous splendour. In this instance it certainly did no harm to the subject of expectation that I had been warned to look for so much. The warning, at any rate, put me on the look-out for whatever eminence there might be of grandeur in his personal appearance ; whilst, on the other hand, this existed in such excess, so far transcending anything I had ever met with in my experience, that no expectation which it is in words to raise could have been disappointed.

These thoughts travelled with the rapidity of light through my brain as at one glance my eye took in the supremacy of beauty and power which seemed to have alighted from the clouds before me. Power, and the contemplation of power, in any absolute incarnation of grandeur or excess, necessarily have the instantaneous effect of quelling all perturbation. My composure was restored in a moment. I looked steadily at him. We both bowed. And, at the moment when he raised his head from that inclination, I caught the glance of his eye; an eye such as might have been looked for in a face of such noble lineaments—

> "Blending the nature of the star
> With that of summer skies";

and, therefore, meant by nature for the residence and organ of serene and gentle emotions; but it surprised, and at the same time filled me more almost with consternation than with pity, to observe that in those eyes a light of sadness had settled more profound than seemed possible for youth, or almost commensurate to a human sorrow; a sadness that might have become a Jewish prophet, when laden with inspirations of woe.

Two months had now passed away since the arrival of Mr. Wyndham. He had been universally introduced to the superior society of the place; and, as I need hardly say, universally received with favour and distinction. In reality, his wealth and importance, his military honours, and the dignity of his character as expressed in his manners and deportment, were too eminent to allow of his being treated with less than the highest attention in any society whatever. But the effect of these various advantages, enforced and recommended as they were by a personal beauty so rare, was somewhat too potent for the comfort and self-possession of ordinary people, and really exceeded in a painful degree the standard of pretensions under which such people could feel themselves at their ease. He was not naturally of a reserved turn; far from it. His disposition had been open, frank, and confiding originally; and his roving, adventurous life, of which considerably more than one-half had been passed in camps, had communicated to his manners a more than

military frankness. But the profound melancholy which possessed him, from whatever cause it arose, necessarily chilled the native freedom of his demeanour, unless when it was revived by strength of friendship or of love. The effect was awkward and embarrassing to all parties. Every voice paused or faltered when he entered a room—dead silence ensued—not an eye but was directed upon him, or else, sunk in timidity, settled upon the floor; and young ladies seriously lost the power, for a time, of doing more than murmuring a few confused, half-inarticulate syllables, or half-inarticulate sounds. The solemnity, in fact, of a first presentation, and the utter impossibility of soon recovering a free unembarrassed movement of conversation, made such scenes really distressing to all who participated in them, either as actors or spectators. Certainly this result was not a pure effect of manly beauty, however heroic, and in whatever excess; it arose in part from the many and extraordinary endowments which had centred in his person, not less from fortune than from nature; in part also, as I have said, from the profound sadness and freezing gravity of Mr. Wyndham's manner; but still more from the perplexing mystery which surrounded that sadness.

Were there, then, no exceptions to this condition of awe-struck admiration? Yes; one at least there was in whose bosom the spell of all-conquering passion soon thawed every trace of icy reserve. Whilst the rest of the world retained a dim sentiment of awe towards Mr. Wyndham, Margaret Liebenheim only heard of such a feeling to wonder that it could exist towards *him*. Never was there so victorious a conquest interchanged between two youthful hearts—never before such a rapture of instantaneous sympathy. I did not witness the first meeting of this mysterious Maximilian and this magnificent Margaret, and do not know whether Margaret manifested that trepidation and embarrassment which distressed so many of her youthful co-rivals; but, if she did, it must have fled before the first glance of the young man's eye, which would interpret, past all misunderstanding, the homage of his soul and the surrender of his heart. Their third meeting I *did* see; and there all shadow of embarrassment had vanished, except, indeed, of that delicate embarrassment which clings to impassioned admiration. On the part of

Margaret it seemed as if a new world had dawned upon her that she had not so much as suspected amongst the capacities of human experience. Like some bird she seemed, with powers unexercised for soaring and flying, not understood even as yet, and that never until now had found an element of air capable of sustaining her wings, or tempting her to put forth her buoyant instincts. He, on the other hand, now first found the realisation of his dreams; and for a mere possibility which he had long too deeply contemplated, fearing, however, that in his own case it might prove a chimera, or that he might never meet a woman answering the demands of his heart, he now found a corresponding reality that left nothing to seek.

Here, then, and thus far, nothing but happiness had resulted from the new arrangement. But, if this had been little anticipated by many, far less had I, for my part, anticipated the unhappy revolution which was wrought in the whole nature of Ferdinand von Harrelstein. He was the son of a German baron; a man of good family, but of small estate, who had been pretty nearly a soldier of fortune in the Prussian service, and had, late in life, won sufficient favour with the king and other military superiors to have an early prospect of obtaining a commission, under flattering auspices, for this only son—a son endeared to him as the companion of unprosperous years, and as a dutifully affectionate child. Ferdinand had yet another hold upon his father's affections; his features preserved to the Baron's unclouded remembrance a most faithful and living memorial of that angelic wife who had died in giving birth to this third child—the only one who had long survived her. Anxious that his son should go through a regular course of mathematical instruction, now becoming annually more important in all the artillery services throughout Europe, and that he should receive a tincture of other liberal studies which he had painfully missed in his own military career, the Baron chose to keep his son for the last seven years at our college, until he was now entering upon his twenty-third year. For the four last he had lived with me as the sole pupil whom I had, or meant to have, had not the brilliant proposals of the young Russian guardsman persuaded me to break my resolution. Ferdinand

von Harrelstein had good talents, not dazzling but respectable; and so amiable were his temper and manners that I had introduced him everywhere; and everywhere he was a favourite; everywhere, indeed, except exactly there where only in this world he cared for favour. Margaret Liebenheim, she it was whom he loved, and had loved for years with the whole ardour of his ardent soul; she it was for whom, or at whose command, he would willingly have died. Early he had felt that in her hands lay his destiny; that she it was who must be his good or his evil genius.

At first, and perhaps to the last, I pitied him exceedingly. But my pity soon ceased to be mingled with respect. Before the arrival of Mr. Wyndham he had shown himself generous, indeed magnanimous. But never was there so painful an overthrow of a noble nature as manifested itself in him. I believe that he had not himself suspected the strength of his passion; and the sole resource for him, as I said often, was —to quit the city; to engage in active pursuits of enterprise, of ambition, or of science. But he heard me as a somnambulist might have heard me—dreaming with his eyes open. Sometimes he had fits of reverie, starting, fearful, agitated; sometimes he broke out into maniacal movements of wrath, invoking some absent person, praying, beseeching, menacing some air-wove phantom; sometimes he slunk into solitary corners—muttering to himself, and with gestures sorrowfully significant, or with tones and fragments of expostulation that moved the most callous to compassion. Still he turned a deaf ear to the only practical counsel that had a chance for reaching his ears. Like a bird under the fascination of a ratttlesnake, he would not summon up the energies of his nature to make an effort at flying away. "Begone whilst it is time!" said others, as well as myself; for more than I saw enough to fear some fearful catastrophe. "Lead us not into temptation!" said his confessor to him in my hearing (for, though Prussians, the Von Harrelsteins were Roman Catholics), "lead us not into temptation!—that is our daily prayer to God. Then, my son, being led into temptation, do not you persist in courting, nay, almost tempting, temptation! Try the effects of absence, though but for a month." The good father even made an overture

towards imposing a penance upon him that would have involved an absence of some duration. But he was obliged to desist; for he saw that, without effecting any good, he would merely add spiritual disobedience to the other offences of the young man. Ferdinand himself drew his attention to *this*; for he said, "Reverend father! do not you, with the purpose of removing me from temptation, be yourself the instrument for tempting me into a rebellion against the Church. Do not you weave snares about my steps; snares there are already, and but too many." The old man sighed, and desisted.

Then came—But enough! From pity, from sympathy, from counsel, and from consolation, and from scorn—from each of these alike the poor stricken deer "recoiled into the wilderness"; he fled for days together into solitary parts of the forest; fled, as I still hoped and prayed, in good earnest and for a long farewell; but, alas! no: still he returned to the haunts of his ruined happiness and his buried hopes, at each return looking more like the wreck of his former self; and once I heard a penetrating monk observe, whose convent stood near to the city gates—"There goes one ready equally for doing or suffering, and of whom we shall soon hear that he is involved in some great catastrophe—it may be, of deep calamity—it may be, of memorable guilt."

So stood matters amongst us; January was drawing to its close; the weather was growing more and more winterly; high winds, piercingly cold, were raving through our narrow streets; and still the spirit of social festivity bade defiance to the storms which sang through our ancient forests. From the accident of our magistracy being selected from the tradesmen of the city, the hospitalities of the place were far more extensive than would otherwise have happened; for every member of the Corporation gave two annual entertainments in his official character. And such was the rivalship which prevailed that often one quarter of the year's income was spent upon these galas. Nor was any ridicule thus incurred; for the costliness of the entertainment was understood to be an expression of *official* pride, done in honour of the city, not as an effort of personal display. It followed, from the spirit in which these half-yearly dances originated,

that, being given on the part of the city, every stranger of rank was marked out as a privileged guest, and the hospitality of the community would have been equally affronted by failing to offer or by failing to accept the invitation.

Hence it had happened that the Russian guardsman had been introduced into many a family which otherwise could not have hoped for such a distinction. Upon the evening at which I am now arrived, the 22d of January 1816, the whole city, in its wealthier classes, was assembled beneath the roof of a tradesman who had the heart of a prince. In every point our entertainment was superb; and I remarked that the music was the finest I had heard for years. Our host was in joyous spirits; proud to survey the splendid company he had gathered under his roof; happy to witness their happiness; elated in their elation. Joyous was the dance—joyous were all faces that I saw—up to midnight, very soon after which time supper was announced; and that also, I think, was the most joyous of all the banquets I ever witnessed. The accomplished guardsman outshone himself in brilliancy; even his melancholy relaxed. In fact, how could it be otherwise? near to him sate Margaret Liebenheim —hanging upon his words—more lustrous and bewitching than ever I had beheld her. There she had been placed by the host; and everybody knew why. That is one of the luxuries attached to love; all men cede their places with pleasure; women make way; even she herself knew, though not obliged to know, why she was seated in that neighbourhood, and took her place—if with a rosy suffusion upon her cheeks—yet with fulness of happiness at her heart.

The guardsman pressed forward to claim Miss Liebenheim's hand for the next dance; a movement which she was quick to favour, by retreating behind one or two parties from a person who seemed coming towards her. The music again began to pour its voluptuous tides through the bounding pulses of the youthful company. Again the flying feet of the dancers began to respond to the measures; again the mounting spirit of delight began to fill the sails of the hurrying night with steady inspiration. All went happily. Already had one dance finished; some were pacing up and

down, leaning on the arms of their partners; some were reposing from their exertions; when—O Heavens! what a shriek! what a gathering tumult!

Every eye was bent towards the doors—every eye strained forwards to discover what was passing. But there, every moment, less and less could be seen, for the gathering crowd more and more intercepted the view; so much the more was the ear at leisure for the shrieks redoubled upon shrieks. Miss Liebenheim had moved downwards to the crowd. From her superior height she overlooked all the ladies at the point where she stood. In the centre stood a rustic girl, whose features had been familiar to her for some months. She had recently come into the city, and had lived with her uncle, a tradesman, not ten doors from Margaret's own residence, partly on the terms of a kinswoman, partly as a servant on trial. At this moment she was exhausted with excitement and the nature of the shock she had sustained. Mere panic seemed to have mastered her; and she was leaning, unconscious and weeping, upon the shoulder of some gentleman who was endeavouring to soothe her. A silence of horror seemed to possess the company, most of whom were still unacquainted with the cause of the alarming interruption. A few, however, who had heard her first agitated words, finding that they waited in vain for a fuller explanation, now rushed tumultuously out of the ballroom to satisfy themselves on the spot. The distance was not great; and within five minutes several persons returned hastily, and cried out to the crowd of ladies that all was true which the young girl had said. "What was true?" That her uncle Mr. Weishaupt's family had been murdered; that not one member of the family had been spared: viz. Mr. Weishaupt himself and his wife, neither of them much above sixty, but both infirm beyond their years; two maiden sisters of Mr. Weishaupt, from forty to forty-six years of age; and an elderly female domestic.

An incident happened during the recital of these horrors, and of the details which followed, that furnished matter for conversation even in these hours when so thrilling interest had possession of all minds. Many ladies fainted; amongst them Miss Liebenheim; and she would have fallen to the

ground but for Maximilian, who sprang forward and caught her in his arms. She was long of returning to herself; and during the agony of his suspense he stooped and kissed her pallid lips. That sight was more than could be borne by one who stood a little behind the group. He rushed forward, with eyes glaring like a tiger's, and levelled a blow at Maximilian. It was poor maniacal Von Harrelstein, who had been absent in the forest for a week. Many people stepped forward and checked his arm, uplifted for a repetition of this outrage. One or two had some influence with him, and led him away from the spot; whilst, as to Maximilian, so absorbed was he that he had not so much as perceived the affront offered to himself. Margaret, on reviving, was confounded at finding herself so situated amidst a great crowd; and yet the prudes complained that there was a look of love exchanged between herself and Maximilian that ought not to have escaped her in such a situation. If they meant, by such a situation, one so public, it must be also recollected that it was a situation of excessive agitation; but, if they alluded to the horrors of the moment, no situation more naturally opens the heart to affection and confiding love than the recoil from scenes of exquisite terror.

An examination went on that night before the magistrates, but all was dark; although suspicion attached to a negro, named Aaron, who had occasionally been employed in menial services by the family, and had been in the house immediately before the murder. The circumstances were such as to leave every man in utter perplexity as to the presumption for and against him. His mode of defending himself, and his general deportment, were marked by the coolest, nay, the most sneering indifference. The first thing he did, on being acquainted with the suspicions against himself, was to laugh ferociously, and, to all appearance, most cordially and unaffectedly. He demanded whether a poor man, like himself, would have left so much wealth as lay scattered abroad in that house, gold repeaters, massy plate, gold snuff-boxes, untouched? That argument, certainly, weighed much in his favour. And yet again it was turned against him—for a magistrate asked him how *he* happened to know already that nothing had been touched? True it was, and a fact which had puzzled no

less than it had awed the magistrates, that upon their examination of the premises many rich articles of *bijouterie*, jewellery, and personal ornaments, had been found lying underanged, and apparently in their usual situations ; articles so portable that in the very hastiest flight some might have been carried off. In particular, there was a crucifix of gold, enriched with jewels so large and rare that of itself it would have constituted a prize of great magnitude. Yet this was left untouched, though suspended in a little oratory that had been magnificently adorned by the elder of the maiden sisters ; there was an altar, in itself a splendid object, furnished with every article of the most costly material and workmanship, for the private celebration of mass. This crucifix, as well as everything else in the little closet, must have been seen by one, at least, of the murderous party ; for hither had one of the ladies fled ; hither had one of the murderers pursued ; she had clasped the golden pillars which supported the altar ; had turned, perhaps, her dying looks upon the crucifix ; for there, with one arm still wreathed about the altar foot, though in her agony she had turned round upon her face, did the elder sister lie when the magistrates first broke open the street door. And upon the beautiful *parquet*, or inlaid floor which ran round the room, were still impressed the footsteps of the murderer. These, it was hoped, might furnish a clue to the discovery of one at least among the murderous band. They were rather difficult to trace accurately ; those parts of the traces which lay upon the black *tessellæ* being less distinct in the outline than the others upon the white or coloured. Most unquestionably, so far as this went, it furnished a negative circumstance in favour of the negro, for the footsteps were very different in outline from his, and smaller, for Aaron was a man of colossal build. And, as to his knowledge of the state in which the premises had been found, and his having so familiarly relied upon the fact of no robbery having taken place as an argument on his own behalf—he contended that he had himself been amongst the crowd that pushed into the house along with the magistrates ; that, from his previous acquaintance with the rooms and their ordinary condition, a glance of the eye had been sufficient for him to ascertain the undisturbed con-

dition of all the valuable property most obvious to the grasp of a robber ; that, in fact, he had seen enough for his argument before he and the rest of the mob had been ejected by the magistrates ; but, finally, that, independently of all this, he had heard both the officers, as they conducted him, and all the tumultuous gatherings of people in the street, arguing for the mysteriousness of the bloody transaction upon that very circumstance of so much gold, silver, and jewels being left behind untouched.

In six weeks or less from the date of this terrific event, the negro was set at liberty by a majority of voices amongst the magistrates. In that short interval other events had occurred, no less terrific and mysterious. In this first murder, though the motive was dark and unintelligible, yet the agency was not so ; ordinary assassins apparently, and with ordinary means, had assailed a helpless and an unprepared family ; had separated them ; attacked them singly in flight (for in this first case all but one of the murdered persons appeared to have been making for the street door) ; and in all this there was no subject for wonder, except the original one as to the motive. But now came a series of cases destined to fling this earliest murder into the shade. Nobody could now be unprepared ; and yet the tragedies, henceforwards, which passed before us, one by one, in sad, leisurely, or in terrific groups, seemed to argue a lethargy like that of apoplexy in the victims, one and all. The very midnight of mysterious awe fell upon all minds.

Three weeks had passed since the murder at Mr. Weishaupt's —three weeks the most agitated that had been known in this sequestered city. We felt ourselves solitary, and thrown upon our own resources ; all combination with other towns being unavailing from their great distance. Our situation was no ordinary one. Had there been some mysterious robbers amongst us, the chances of a visit, divided amongst so many, would have been too small to distress the most timid ; whilst to young and high-spirited people, with courage to spare for ordinary trials, such a state of expectation would have sent pulses of pleasurable anxiety amongst the nerves. But murderers ! exterminating murderers !— clothed in mystery and utter darkness—these were objects

too terrific for any family to contemplate with fortitude. Had these very murderers added to their functions those of robbery, they would have become less terrific ; nine out of every ten would have found themselves discharged, as it were, from the roll of those who were liable to a visit ; while such as knew themselves liable would have had warning of their danger in the fact of being rich, and would, from the very riches which constituted that danger, have derived the means of repelling it. But, as things were, no man could guess what it was that must make him obnoxious to the murderers. Imagination exhausted itself in vain guesses at the causes which could by possibility have made the poor Weishaupts objects of such hatred to any man. True, they were bigoted in a degree which indicated feebleness of intellect : but *that* wounded no man in particular, whilst to many it recommended them. True, their charity was narrow and exclusive, but to those of their own religious body it expanded munificently ; and, being rich beyond their wants, or any means of employing wealth which their gloomy asceticism allowed, they had the power of doing a great deal of good amongst the indigent Papists of the suburbs. As to the old gentleman and his wife, their infirmities confined them to the house. Nobody remembered to have seen them abroad for years. How, therefore, or when, could they have made an enemy ? And, with respect to the maiden sisters of Mr. Weishaupt, they were simply weak-minded persons, now and then too censorious, but not placed in a situation to incur serious anger from any quarter, and too little heard of in society to occupy much of anybody's attention.

Conceive, then, that three weeks have passed away, that the poor Weishaupts have been laid in that narrow sanctuary which no murderer's voice will ever violate. Quiet has not returned to us, but the first flutterings of panic have subsided. People are beginning to respire freely again ; and such another space of time would have cicatrised our wounds—when, hark ! a church-bell rings out a loud alarm ;—the night is starlight and frosty—the iron notes are heard, clear, solemn, but agitated. What could this mean ? I hurried to a room over the porter's lodge, and, opening the window, I cried out to a man passing hastily below—" What, in God's

name, is the meaning of this ?" It was a watchman belonging to our district. I knew his voice ; he knew mine ; and he replied in great agitation—

"It is another murder, sir, at the old town-councillor's, Albernass ; and this time they have made a clear house of it."

"God preserve us ! Has a curse been pronounced upon this city ? What can be done ? What are the magistrates going to do ?"

"I don't know, sir. I have orders to run to the Black Friars, where another meeting is gathering. Shall I say you will attend, sir ?"

"Yes—no—stop a little. No matter, you may go on ; I'll follow immediately."

I went instantly to Maximilian's room. He was lying asleep on a sofa ; at which I was not surprised, for there had been a severe stag-chase in the morning. Even at this moment, I found myself arrested by two objects, and paused to survey them. One was Maximilian himself. A person so mysterious took precedency of other interests even at a time like this ; and especially by his features, which, composed in profound sleep, as sometimes happens, assumed a new expression—which arrested me chiefly by awaking some confused remembrance of the same features seen under other circumstances and in times long past ; but where ? This was what I could not recollect, though once before a thought of the same sort had crossed my mind. The other object of my interest was a miniature, which Maximilian was holding in his hand. He had gone to sleep apparently looking at this picture ; and the hand which held it had slipped down upon the sofa, so that it was in danger of falling. I released the miniature from his hand, and surveyed it attentively ; it represented a lady of sunny Oriental complexion, and features the most noble that it is possible to conceive. One might have imagined such a lady, with her raven locks and imperial eyes, to be the favourite sultana of some Amurath or Mahomet. What was she to Maximilian, or what *had* she been ? For, by the tear which I had once seen him drop upon this miniature when he believed himself unobserved, I conjectured that her dark tresses were already

laid low, and her name among the list of vanished things. Probably she was his mother, for the dress was rich with pearls, and evidently that of a person in the highest rank of court beauties. I sighed as I thought of the stern melancholy of her son, if Maximilian were he, as connected, probably, with the fate and fortunes of this majestic beauty ; somewhat haughty, perhaps, in the expression of her fine features, but still noble—generous—confiding. Laying the picture on the table, I awoke Maximilian and told him of the dreadful news. He listened attentively, made no remark, but proposed that we should go together to the meeting of our quarter at the Black Friars. He coloured upon observing the miniature on the table, and, therefore, I frankly told him in what situation I had found it, and that I had taken the liberty of admiring it for a few moments. He pressed it tenderly to his lips, sighed heavily, and we walked away together.

I pass over the frenzied state of feeling in which we found the meeting. Fear, or rather horror, did not promote harmony ; many quarrelled with each other in discussing the suggestions brought forward, and Maximilian was the only person attended to ; he proposed a nightly mounted patrol for every district. And, in particular, he offered, as being himself a member of the University, that the students should form themselves into a guard, and go out by rotation to keep watch and ward from sunset to sunrise. Arrangements were made towards that object by the few people who retained possession of their senses, and for the present we separated.

Never, in fact, did any events so keenly try the difference between man and man. Some started up into heroes under the excitement. Some, alas for the dignity of Man ! drooped into helpless imbecility. Women, in some cases, rose superior to men, but yet not so often as might have happened under a less mysterious danger. A woman is not unwomanly because she affronts danger boldly. But I have remarked, with respect to female courage, that it requires, more than that of men, to be sustained by hope ; and that it droops more certainly in the presence of a *mysterious* danger. The fancy of women is more active, if not stronger, and it influences more directly the physical nature. In

this case few were the women who made even a show of defying the danger. On the contrary, with *them* fear took the form of sadness; while with many of the men it took that of wrath.

And how did the Russian guardsman conduct himself amidst this panic? Many were surprised at his behaviour; some complained of it; I did neither. He took a reasonable interest in each separate case, listened to the details with attention, and, in the examination of persons able to furnish evidence, never failed to suggest judicious questions. But still he manifested a coolness almost amounting to carelessness, which to many appeared revolting. But these people I desired to notice that all the other military students, who had been long in the army, felt exactly in the same way. In fact, the military service of Christendom, for the last ten years, had been anything but a parade service; and to those, therefore, who were familiar with every form of horrid butchery the mere outside horrors of death had lost much of their terror. In the recent murder there had not been much to call forth sympathy. The family consisted of two old bachelors, two sisters, and one grand-niece. The niece was absent on a visit, and the two old men were cynical misers, to whom little personal interest attached. Still, in this case as in that of the Weishaupts, the same twofold mystery confounded the public mind; the mystery of the *how*, and the profounder mystery of the *why*. Here, again, no atom of property was taken, though both the misers had hordes of ducats and English guineas in the very room where they died. Their bias, again, though of an unpopular character, had rather availed to make them unknown than to make them hateful. In one point this case differed memorably from the other—that, instead of falling helpless or flying victims (as the Weishaupts had done), these old men, strong, resolute, and not so much taken by surprise, left proofs that they had made a desperate defence. The furniture was partly smashed to pieces, and the other details furnished evidence still more revolting of the *acharnement* with which the struggle had been maintained. In fact, with *them* a surprise must have been impracticable, as they admitted nobody into their house on visiting terms. It was

thought singular that from each of these domestic tragedies a benefit of the same sort should result to young persons standing in nearly the same relation. The girl who gave the alarm at the ball, with two little sisters, and a little orphan nephew, their cousin, divided the very large inheritance of the Weishaupts; and in this latter case the accumulated savings of two long lives all vested in the person of the amiable grand-niece.

But now, as if in mockery of all our anxious consultations and elaborate devices, three fresh murders took place on the two consecutive nights succeeding these new arrangements. And in one case, as nearly as time could be noted, the mounted patrol must have been within call at the very moment when the awful work was going on. I shall not dwell much upon them; but a few circumstances are too interesting to be passed over. The earliest case on the first of the two nights was that of a currier. He was fifty years old; not rich, but well off. His first wife was dead, and his daughters by her were married away from their father's house. He had married a second wife, but, having no children by her, and keeping no servants, it is probable that, but for an accident, no third person would have been in the house at the time when the murderers got admittance. About seven o'clock a wayfaring man, a journeyman currier, who, according to our German system, was now in his *wanderjahre*, entered the city from the forest. At the gate he made some inquiries about the curriers and tanners of our town, and, agreeably to the information he received, made his way to this Mr. Heinberg's. Mr. Heinberg refused to admit him, until he mentioned his errand, and pushed below the door a letter of recommendation from a Silesian correspondent, describing him as an excellent and steady workman. Wanting such a man, and satisfied by the answers returned that he was what he represented himself, Mr. Heinberg unbolted his door and admitted him. Then, after slipping the bolt into its place, he bade him sit to the fire; brought him a glass of beer; conversed with him for ten minutes; and said, "You had better stay here to-night; I'll tell you why afterwards; but now I'll step upstairs and ask my wife whether she can make up a bed for you; and

do you mind the door whilst I'm away." So saying, he went out of the room. Not one minute had he been gone when there came a gentle knock at the door. It was raining heavily; and, being a stranger to the city, not dreaming that in any crowded town such a state of things could exist as really did in this, the young man, without hesitation, admitted the person knocking. He has declared since—but, perhaps, confounding the feelings gained from better knowledge with the feelings of the moment—that from the moment he drew the bolt he had a misgiving that he had done wrong. A man entered in a horseman's cloak, and so muffled up that the journeyman could discover none of his features. In a low tone the stranger said, "Where's Heinberg?" "Upstairs." "Call him down, then." The journeyman went to the door by which Mr. Heinberg had left him, and called, "Mr. Heinberg, here's one wanting you!" Mr. Heinberg heard him, for the man could distinctly catch these words, "God bless me! has the man opened the door? Oh, the traitor! I see it." Upon this, he felt more and more consternation, though not knowing why. Just then he heard a sound of feet behind him. On turning round, he beheld three more men in the room: one was fastening the outer door; one was drawing some arms from a cupboard; and two others were whispering together. He himself was disturbed and perplexed, and felt that all was not right. Such was his confusion that either all the men's faces must have been muffled up, or at least he remembered nothing distinctly but one fierce pair of eyes glaring upon him. Then, before he could look round, came a man from behind and threw a sack over his head, which was drawn tight about his waist, so as to confine his arms, as well as to impede his hearing in part, and his voice altogether. He was then pushed into a room; but previously he had heard a rush upstairs, and words like those of a person exulting, and then a door closed; once it opened, and he could distinguish the words in one voice—"and for *that!*" to which another voice replied, in tones that made his heart quake—"Ay, for *that*, sir." And then the same voice went on rapidly to say, "Oh, dog! could you hope?"—at which word the door closed again. Once he thought that he heard a

scuffle, and he was sure that he heard the sound of feet, as if rushing from one corner of a room to another. But then all was hushed and still for about six or seven minutes, until a voice close to his ear said, "Now, wait quietly till some persons come in to release you. This will happen within half-an-hour." Accordingly, in less than that time, he again heard the sound of feet within the house, his own bandages were liberated, and he was brought to tell his story at the police-office. Mr. Heinberg was found in his bed-room. He had died by strangulation, and the cord was still tightened about his neck. During the whole dreadful scene his youthful wife had been locked into a closet, where she heard or saw nothing.

In the second case the object of vengeance was again an elderly man. Of the ordinary family, all were absent at a country house except the master and a female servant. She was a woman of courage, and blessed with the firmest nerves; so that she might have been relied on for reporting accurately everything seen or heard. But things took another course. The first warning that she had of the murderers' presence was from their steps and voices already in the hall. She heard her master run hastily into the hall, crying out, "Lord Jesus!—Mary, Mary, save me!" The servant resolved to give what aid she could, seized a large poker, and was hurrying to his assistance, when she found that they had nailed up the door of communication at the head of the stairs. What passed after this she could not tell; for, when the impulse of intrepid fidelity had been balked, and she found that her own safety was provided for by means which made it impossible to aid a poor fellow-creature who had just invoked her name, the generous-hearted creature was overcome by anguish of mind, and sank down on the stair,—where she lay, unconscious of all that succeeded, until she found herself raised in the arms of a mob who had entered the house. And how came they to have entered? In a way characteristically dreadful. The night was star-lit; the patrols had perambulated the street without noticing anything suspicious, when two foot-passengers, who were following in their rear, observed a dark-coloured stream traversing the causeway. One of them at the same

instant, tracing the stream backwards with his eyes, observed that it flowed from under the door of Mr. Münzer; and, dipping his finger in the trickling fluid, he held it up to the lamp-light, yelling out at the moment, "Why, this is blood!" It was so indeed, and it was yet warm. The other saw, heard, and, like an arrow, flew after the horse-patrol, then in the act of turning the corner. One cry, full of meaning, was sufficient for ears full of expectation. The horsemen pulled up, wheeled, and in another moment reined up at Mr. Münzer's door. The crowd, gathering like the drifting of snow, supplied implements which soon forced the chains of the door, and all other obstacles. But the murderous party had escaped, and all traces of their persons had vanished, as usual.

Rarely did any case occur without some peculiarity more or less interesting. In that which happened on the following night, making the fifth in the series, an impressive incident varied the monotony of horrors. In this case the parties aimed at were two elderly ladies, who conducted a female boarding-school. None of the pupils had, as yet, returned to school from their vacation; but two sisters, young girls of thirteen and sixteen, coming from a distance, had stayed at school throughout the Christmas holidays. It was the youngest of these who gave the only evidence of any value, and one which added a new feature of alarm to the existing panic. Thus it was that her testimony was given: —On the day before the murder, she and her sister were sitting with the old ladies in a room fronting to the street; the elder ladies were reading, the young ones drawing. Louisa, the youngest, never had her ear inattentive to the slightest sound, and once it struck her that she heard the creaking of a foot upon the stairs. She said nothing; but, slipping out of the room, she ascertained that the two female servants were in the kitchen, and could not have been absent; that all the doors and windows by which ingress was possible were not only locked, but bolted and barred,—a fact which excluded all possibility of invasion by means of false keys. Still, she felt persuaded that she had heard the sound of a heavy foot upon the stairs. It was, however, daylight, and this gave her confidence, so that, without communicating her alarm to

anybody, she found courage to traverse the house in every direction; and, as nothing was either seen or heard, she concluded that her ears had been too sensitively awake. Yet that night, as she lay in bed, dim terrors assailed her, especially because she considered that, in so large a house, some closet or other might have been overlooked, and, in particular, she did not remember to have examined one or two chests in which a man could have lain concealed. Through the greater part of the night she lay awake; but, as one of the town clocks struck four, she dismissed her anxieties, and fell asleep. The next day, wearied with this unusual watching, she proposed to her sister that they should go to bed earlier than usual. This they did: and on their way upstairs Louisa happened to think suddenly of a heavy cloak, which would improve the coverings of her bed against the severity of the night. The cloak was hanging up in a closet within a closet, both leading off from a large room used as the young ladies' dancing-school. These closets she had examined on the previous day, and therefore she felt no particular alarm at this moment. The cloak was the first article which met her sight; it was suspended from a hook in the wall, and close to the door. She took it down, but, in doing so, exposed part of the wall and of the floor, which its folds had previously concealed. Turning away hastily, the chances were that she had gone without making any discovery. In the act of turning, however, her light fell brightly on a man's foot and leg. Matchless was her presence of mind; having previously been humming an air, she continued to do so. But now came the trial; her sister was bending her steps to the same closet. If she suffered her to do so, Lottchen would stumble on the same discovery, and expire of fright. On the other hand, if she gave her a hint, Lottchen would either fail to understand her, or, gaining but a glimpse of her meaning, would shriek aloud, or by some equally decisive expression convey the fatal news to the assassin that he had been discovered. In this torturing dilemma fear prompted an expedient, which to Lottchen appeared madness, and to Louisa herself the act of a sibyl instinct with blind inspiration. "Here," said she, "is our dancing-room. When shall we all meet and dance

again together?" Saying which, she commenced a wild dance, whirling her candle round her head until the motion extinguished it; then, eddying round her sister in narrowing circles, she seized Lottchen's candle also, blew it out, and then interrupted her own singing to attempt a laugh. But the laugh was hysterical. The darkness, however, favoured her; and, seizing her sister's arm, she forced her along, whispering, "Come, come, come!" Lottchen could not be so dull as entirely to misunderstand her. She suffered herself to be led up the first flight of stairs, at the head of which was a room looking into the street. In this they would have gained an asylum, for the door had a strong bolt. But, as they were on the last steps of the landing, they could hear the hard breathing and long strides of the murderer ascending behind them. He had watched them through a crevice, and had been satisfied, by the hysterical laugh of Louisa, that she had seen him. In the darkness he could not follow fast, from ignorance of the localities, until he found himself upon the stairs. Louisa, dragging her sister along, felt strong as with the strength of lunacy, but Lottchen hung like a weight of lead upon her. She rushed into the room; but, at the very entrance, Lottchen fell. At that moment the assassin exchanged his stealthy pace for a loud clattering ascent. Already he was on the topmost stair—already he was throwing himself at a bound against the door, when Louisa, having dragged her sister into the room, closed the door and sent the bolt home in the very instant that the murderer's hand came into contact with the handle. Then, from the violence of her emotions, she fell down in a fit, with her arm round the sister whom she had saved.

How long they lay in this state neither ever knew. The two old ladies had rushed upstairs on hearing the tumult. Other persons had been concealed in other parts of the house. The servants found themselves suddenly locked in, and were not sorry to be saved from a collision which involved so awful a danger. The old ladies had rushed, side by side, into the very centre of those who were seeking them. Retreat was impossible; two persons at least were heard following them upstairs. Something like a shrieking expostulation and

counter-expostulation went on between the ladies and the murderers — then came louder voices — then one heart-piercing shriek, and then another—and then a low moaning and a dead silence. Shortly afterwards was heard the first crashing of the door inwards by the mob ; but the murderers had fled upon the first alarm, and, to the astonishment of the servants, had fled upwards. Examination, however, explained this : from a window in the roof, they had passed to an adjoining house recently left empty ; and here, as in other cases, we had proof how apt people are, in the midst of elaborate provisions against remote dangers, to neglect those which are obvious.

The reign of terror, it may be supposed, had now reached its *acmé*. The two old ladies were both lying dead at different points on the staircase, and, as usual, no conjecture could be made as to the nature of the offence which they had given ; but that the murder *was* a vindictive one the usual evidence remained behind in the proofs that no robbery had been attempted. Two new features, however, were now brought forward in this system of horrors, one of which riveted the sense of their insecurity to all families occupying extensive houses, and the other raised ill blood between the city and the University, such as required years to allay. The first arose out of the experience, now first obtained, that these assassins pursued the plan of secreting themselves within the house where they meditated a murder. All the care, therefore, previously directed to the securing of doors and windows after nightfall appeared nugatory. The other feature brought to light on this occasion was vouched for by one of the servants, who declared that, the moment before the door of the kitchen was fastened upon herself and fellow-servant, she saw two men in the hall, one on the point of ascending the stairs, the other making towards the kitchen ; that she could not distinguish the faces of either, but that both were dressed in the academic costume belonging to the students of the University. The consequences of such a declaration need scarcely be mentioned. Suspicion settled upon the students, who were more numerous since the general peace, in a much larger proportion military, and less select or respectable than heretofore. Still, no part of the mystery was cleared up by

this discovery; many of the students were poor enough to feel the temptation that might be offered by any *lucrative* system of outrage. Jealous and painful collusions were, in the meantime, produced; and, during the latter two months of this winter, it may be said that our city exhibited the very anarchy of evil passions. This condition of things lasted until the dawning of another spring.

It will be supposed that communications were made to the Supreme Government of the land as soon as the murders in our city were understood to be no casual occurrences, but links in a systematic series. Perhaps it might happen, from some other business of a higher kind, just then engaging the attention of our governors, that our representations did not make the impression we had expected. We could not, indeed, complain of absolute neglect from the Government: they sent down one or two of their most accomplished police-officers, and they suggested some counsels, especially that we should examine more strictly into the quality of the miscellaneous population who occupied our large suburb. But they more than hinted that no necessity was seen either for quartering troops upon us, or for arming our local magistracy with ampler powers.

This correspondence with the central Government occupied the month of March, and before that time the bloody system had ceased as abruptly as it began. The new police-officer flattered himself that the terror of his name had wrought this effect; but judicious people thought otherwise. All, however, was quiet until the depth of summer, when, by way of hinting to us, perhaps, that the dreadful power which clothed itself with darkness had not expired, but was only reposing from its labours, all at once the chief jailor of the city was missing. He had been in the habit of taking long rides in the forest, his present situation being much of a sinecure. It was on the 1st of July that he was missed. In riding through the city gates that morning he had mentioned the direction which he meant to pursue; and the last time he was seen alive was in one of the forest avenues about eight miles from the city, leading towards the point he had indicated. This jailor was not a man to be regretted on his own account; his life had been a tissue of cruelty and brutal

abuse of his powers, in which he had been too much supported by the magistrates, partly on the plea that it was their duty to back their own officers against all complainers, partly also from the necessities created by the turbulent times for a more summary exercise of their magisterial authority. No man, therefore, on his own separate account, could more willingly have been spared than this brutal jailor; and it was a general remark that, had the murderous band within our walls swept away this man only, they would have merited the public gratitude as purifiers from a public nuisance. But was it certain that the jailor had died by the same hands as had so deeply afflicted the peace of our city during the winter? or, indeed, that he had been murdered at all? The forest was too extensive to be searched; and it was possible that he might have met with some fatal accident. His horse had returned to the city gates in the night, and was found there in the morning. Nobody, however, for months, could give information about his rider; and it seemed probable that he would not be discovered until the autumn and the winter should again carry the sportsman into every thicket and dingle of this silvan tract. One person only seemed to have more knowledge on this subject than others, and that was poor Ferdinand von Harrelstein. He was now a mere ruin of what he had once been, both as to intellect and moral feeling; and I observed him frequently smile when the jailor was mentioned. "Wait," he would say, "till the leaves begin to drop; then you will see what fine fruit our forest bears." I did not repeat these expressions to anybody except one friend, who agreed with me that the jailor had probably been hanged in some recess of the forest which summer veiled with its luxuriant umbrage; and that Ferdinand, constantly wandering in the forest, had discovered the body: but we both acquitted him of having been an accomplice in the murder.

Meantime, the marriage between Margaret Liebenheim and Maximilian was understood to be drawing near. Yet one thing struck everybody with astonishment. As far as the young people were concerned, nobody could doubt that all was arranged; for never was happiness more perfect than that which seemed to unite them. Margaret was the

impersonation of Maytime and youthful rapture ; even Maximilian in her presence seemed to forget his gloom ; and the worm which gnawed at his heart was charmed asleep by the music of her voice and the Paradise of her smiles. But, until the autumn came, Margaret's grandfather had never ceased to frown upon this connexion, and to support the pretensions of Ferdinand. The dislike, indeed, seemed reciprocal between him and Maximilian. Each avoided the other's company ; and, as to the old man, he went so far as to speak sneeringly of Maximilian. Maximilian despised him too heartily to speak of him at all. When he could not avoid meeting him, he treated him with a stern courtesy which distressed Margaret as often as she witnessed it. She felt that her grandfather had been the aggressor ; and she felt, also, that he did injustice to the merits of her lover. But she had a filial tenderness for the old man, as the father of her sainted mother, and on his own account continually making more claims on her pity, as the decay of his memory, and a childish fretfulness growing upon him from day to day, marked his increasing imbecility.

Equally mysterious it seemed that, about this time, Miss Liebenheim began to receive anonymous letters, written in the darkest and most menacing terms. Some of them she showed to me ; I could not guess at their drift. Evidently they glanced at Maximilian, and bade her beware of a connexion with him ; and dreadful things were insinuated about him. Could these letters be written by Ferdinand ? Written they were not ; but could they be dictated by him ? Much I feared that they were ; and the more so for one reason.

All at once, and most inexplicably, Margaret's grandfather showed a total change of opinion in his views as to her marriage. Instead of favouring Harrelstein's pretensions, as he had hitherto done, he now threw the feeble weight of his encouragement into Maximilian's scale ; though, from the situation of all the parties, nobody attached any *practical* importance to the change in Mr. Liebenheim's way of thinking. Nobody ? Is that true ? No ; one person *did* attach the greatest weight to the change ; poor ruined Ferdinand ; —he, so long as there was one person to take his part, so

long as the grandfather of Margaret showed countenance to himself, had still felt his situation not utterly desperate.

Thus were things situated when in November, all the leaves daily blowing off from the woods, and leaving bare the most secret haunts of the thickets, the body of the jailor was left exposed in the forest; but not, as I and my friend had conjectured, hanged; no; he had died, apparently, by a more horrid death—by that of crucifixion. The tree, a remarkable one, bore upon a part of its trunk this brief but savage inscription:—"T. H., jailor at ——; *Crucified, July* 1, 1816."

A great deal of talk went on throughout the city upon this discovery; nobody uttered one word of regret on account of the wretched jailor; on the contrary, the voice of vengeance, rising up in many a cottage, reached my ears in every direction as I walked abroad. The hatred in itself seemed horrid and unchristian, and still more so after the man's death; but, though horrid and fiendish for itself, it was much more impressive, considered as the measure and exponent of the damnable oppression which must have existed to produce it.

At first, when the absence of the jailor was a recent occurrence, and the presence of the murderers amongst us was, in consequence, revived to our anxious thoughts, it was an event which few alluded to without fear. But matters were changed now; the jailor had been dead for months, and this interval, during which the murderer's hand had slept, encouraged everybody to hope that the storm had passed over our city; that peace had returned to our hearths; and that, henceforth, weakness might sleep in safety, and innocence without anxiety. Once more we had peace within our walls, and tranquillity by our firesides. Again the child went to bed in cheerfulness, and the old man said his prayers in serenity. Confidence was restored; peace was re-established; and once again the sanctity of human life became the rule and the principle for all human hands amongst us. Great was the joy; the happiness was universal.

Oh, heavens! by what a thunderbolt were we awakened from our security!—On the night of the 27th of December,

half-an-hour, it might be, after twelve o'clock, an alarm was given that all was not right in the house of Mr. Liebenheim. Vast was the crowd which soon collected in breathless agitation. In two minutes a man who had gone round by the back of the house was heard unbarring Mr. Liebenheim's door: he was incapable of uttering a word, but his gestures, as he threw the door open and beckoned to the crowd, were quite enough. In the hall, at the further extremity, and as if arrested in the act of making for the back, lay the bodies of old Mr. Liebenheim and one of his sisters, an aged widow; on the stair lay another sister, younger, and unmarried, but upwards of sixty. The hall and lower flight of stairs were floating with blood. Where, then, was Miss Liebenheim, the grand-daughter? That was the universal cry; for she was beloved as generally as she was admired. Had the infernal murderers been devilish enough to break into that temple of innocent and happy life?—Every one asked the question, and every one held his breath to listen; but for a few moments no one dared to advance; for the silence of the house was ominous. At length some one cried out that Miss Liebenheim had that day gone upon a visit to a friend, whose house was forty miles distant in the forest. "Ay," replied another, "she had settled to go; but I heard that something had stopped her." The suspense was now at its height, and the crowd passed from room to room, but found no traces of Miss Liebenheim. At length they ascended the stair, and in the very first room, a small closet or *boudoir*, lay Margaret, with her dress soiled hideously with blood. The first impression was that she also had been murdered; but, on a nearer approach, she appeared to be unwounded, and was manifestly alive. Life had not departed, for her breath sent a haze over a mirror; but it was suspended, and she was labouring in some kind of fit. The first act of the crowd was to carry her into the house of a friend on the opposite side of the street, by which time medical assistance had crowded to the spot. Their attentions to Miss Liebenheim had naturally deranged the condition of things in the little room, but not before many people found time to remark that one of the murderers must have carried her with his bloody hands to the sofa on which she lay, for water had been sprinkled

profusely over her face and throat, and water was even placed ready to her hand, when she might happen to recover, upon a low footstool by the side of the sofa.

On the following morning, Maximilian, who had been upon a hunting party in the forest, returned to the city, and immediately learned the news. I did not see him for some hours after, but he then appeared to me thoroughly agitated, for the first time I had known him to be so. In the evening another perplexing piece of intelligence transpired with regard to Miss Liebenheim, which at first afflicted every friend of that young lady. It was that she had been seized with the pains of childbirth, and delivered of a son, who, however, being born prematurely, did not live many hours. Scandal, however, was not allowed long to batten upon this imaginary triumph ; for, within two hours after the circulation of this first rumour, followed a second, authenticated, announcing that Maximilian had appeared, with the confessor of the Liebenheim family, at the residence of the chief magistrate, and there produced satisfactory proofs of his marriage with Miss Liebenheim,—which had been duly celebrated, though with great secrecy, nearly eight months before. In our city, as in all the cities of our country, clandestine marriages, witnessed, perhaps, by two friends only of the parties, besides the officiating priest, are exceedingly common. In the mere fact, therefore, taken separately, there was nothing to surprise us ; but, taken in connexion with the general position of the parties, it *did* surprise us all ; nor could we conjecture the reason for a step apparently so needless. For, that Maximilian could have thought it any point of prudence or necessity to secure the hand of Margaret Liebenheim by a private marriage, against the final opposition of her grandfather, nobody who knew the parties, who knew the perfect love which possessed Miss Liebenheim, the growing imbecility of her grandfather, or the utter contempt with which Maximilian regarded him, could for a moment believe. Altogether, the matter was one of profound mystery.

Meantime, it rejoiced me that poor Margaret's name had been thus rescued from the fangs of the scandal-mongers : these harpies had their prey torn from them at the very moment when they were sitting down to the unhallowed

banquet. For this I rejoiced, but else there was little subject for rejoicing in anything which concerned poor Margaret. Long she lay in deep insensibility, taking no notice of anything, rarely opening her eyes, and apparently unconscious of the revolutions, as they succeeded, of morning or evening, light or darkness, yesterday or to-day. Great was the agitation which convulsed the heart of Maximilian during this period; he walked up and down in the Cathedral nearly all day long, and the ravages which anxiety was working in his physical system might be read in his face. People felt it an intrusion upon the sanctity of his grief to look at him too narrowly, and the whole town sympathised with his situation.

At length a change took place in Margaret, but one which the medical men announced to Maximilian as boding ill for her recovery. The wanderings of her mind did not depart, but they altered their character. She became more agitated; she would start up suddenly, and strain her eyesight after some figure which she seemed to see; then she would apostrophise some person in the most piteous terms, beseeching him, with streaming tears, to spare her old grandfather. "Look, look," she would cry out, "look at his gray hairs; oh, sir! he is but a child; he does not know what he says; and he will soon be out of the way and in his grave; and very soon, sir, he will give you no more trouble." Then, again, she would mutter indistinctly for hours together; sometimes, she would cry out frantically, and say things which terrified the bystanders, and which the physicians would solemnly caution them how they repeated; then she would weep, and invoke Maximilian to come and aid her. But seldom, indeed, did that name pass her lips that she did not again begin to strain her eyeballs, and start up in bed to watch some phantom of her poor fevered heart, as if it seemed vanishing into some mighty distance.

After nearly seven weeks passed in this agitating state, suddenly, on one morning, the earliest and loveliest of dawning spring, a change was announced to us all as having taken place in Margaret; but it was a change, alas! that ushered in the last great change of all. The conflict which had for so long a period raged within her, and overthrown her reason, was at an end; the strife was over; and nature was settling

into an everlasting rest. In the course of the night she had recovered her senses ; when the morning light penetrated through her curtain, she recognised her attendants, made inquiries as to the month and the day of the month, and then, sensible that she could not outlive the day, she requested that her confessor might be summoned.

About an hour and a half the confessor remained alone with her. At the end of that time he came out and hastily summoned the attendants, for Margaret, he said, was sinking into a fainting fit. The confessor himself might have passed through many a fit, so much was he changed by the results of this interview. I crossed him coming out of the house. I spoke to him—I called to him ; but he heard me not—he saw me not. He saw nobody. Onwards he strode to the Cathedral, where Maximilian was sure to be found, pacing about upon the graves. Him he seized by the arm, whispered something into his ear, and then both retired into one of the many sequestered chapels in which lights are continually burning. There they had some conversation, but not very long, for within five minutes Maximilian strode away to the house in which his young wife was dying. One step seemed to carry him upstairs ; the attendants, according to the directions they had received from the physicians, mustered at the head of the stairs to oppose him. But that was idle : before the rights which he held as a lover and a husband, before the still more sacred rights of grief, which he carried in his countenance, all opposition fled like a dream. There was, besides, a fury in his eye. A motion of his hand waved them off like summer flies ; he entered the room, and once again, for the last time, he was in company with his beloved.

What passed who could pretend to guess ? Something more than two hours had elapsed, during which Margaret had been able to talk occasionally,—which was known because at times the attendants heard the sound of Maximilian's voice evidently in tones of reply to something which she had said. At the end of that time, a little bell, placed near the bedside, was rung hastily ; a fainting fit had seized Margaret, but she recovered almost before her women applied the usual remedies. They lingered, however, a little, looking at the youthful couple with an interest which no restraints availed

to check. Their hands were locked together, and in Margaret's eyes there gleamed a farewell light of love, which settled upon Maximilian, and seemed to indicate that she was becoming speechless. Just at this moment she made a feeble effort to draw Maximilian towards her; he bent forward and kissed her with an anguish that made the most callous weep, and then he whispered something into her ear, upon which the attendants retired, taking this as a proof that their presence was a hindrance to a free communication. But they heard no more talking, and in less than ten minutes they returned. Maximilian and Margaret still retained their former position. Their hands were fast locked together; the same parting ray of affection, the same farewell light of love, was in the eye of Margaret, and still it settled upon Maximilian. But her eyes were beginning to grow dim; mists were rapidly stealing over them. Maximilian, who sat stupefied and like one not in his right mind, now, at the gentle request of the women, resigned his seat, for the hand which had clasped his had already relaxed its hold; the farewell gleam of love had departed; one of the women closed her eyelids; and there fell asleep forever the loveliest flower that our city had reared for generations.

The funeral took place on the fourth day after her death. In the morning of that day, from strong affection—having known her from an infant—I begged permission to see the corpse. She was in her coffin; snowdrops and crocuses were laid upon her innocent bosom, and roses of that sort which the season allowed over her person. These and other lovely symbols of youth, of spring-time, and of resurrection, caught my eye for the first moment; but in the next it fell upon her face. Mighty God! what a change! what a transfiguration! Still, indeed, there was the same innocent sweetness; still there was something of the same loveliness; the expression still remained; but for the features—all trace of flesh seemed to have vanished; mere outline of bony structure remained; mere pencillings and shadowings of what she once had been. This is indeed, I exclaimed, "dust to dust—ashes to ashes!"

Maximilian, to the astonishment of everybody, attended the funeral. It was celebrated in the Cathedral. All made

way for him, and at times he seemed collected ; at times, he reeled like one who was drunk. He heard as one who hears not ; he saw as one in a dream. The whole ceremony went on by torchlight, and towards the close he stood like a pillar, motionless, torpid, frozen. But the great burst of the choir, and the mighty blare ascending from our vast organ at the closing of the grave, recalled him to himself, and he strode rapidly homewards. Half-an-hour after I returned I was summoned to his bed-room. He was in bed, calm and collected. What he said to me I remember as if it had been yesterday, and the very tone with which he said it, although more than twenty years have passed since then. He began thus : "I have not long to live" ; and, when he saw me start, suddenly awakened into a consciousness that perhaps he had taken poison, and meant to intimate as much, he continued—"You fancy I have taken poison ;—no matter whether I have or not ; if I have, the poison is such that no antidotes will now avail ; or, if they would, you well know that some griefs are of a kind which leave no opening to any hope. What difference, therefore, can it make whether I leave this earth to-day, to-morrow, or the next day ? Be assured of this—that whatever I have determined to do is past all power of being affected by human opposition. Occupy yourself not with any fruitless attempts, but calmly listen to me ; else I know what to do." Seeing a suppressed fury in his eye, notwithstanding that I saw also some change stealing over his features as if from some subtle poison beginning to work upon his frame, awe-struck I consented to listen, and sat still. "It is well that you do so, for my time is short. Here is my will, legally drawn up, and you will see that I have committed an immense property to your discretion. Here, again, is a paper still more important in my eyes ; it is also testamentary, and binds you to duties which may not be so easy to execute as the disposal of my property. But now listen to something else which concerns neither of these papers. Promise me, in the first place, solemnly, that whenever I die you will see me buried in the same grave as my wife, from whose funeral we are just returned. Promise." I promised. "Swear." I swore. "Finally, promise me that, when you read this second paper

which I have put into your hands, whatsoever you may think of it, you will say nothing—publish nothing to the world, until three years shall have passed." I promised. "And now farewell for three hours; come to me again about ten o'clock and take a glass of wine in memory of old times." This he said laughingly; but even then a dark spasm crossed his face. Yet, thinking that this might be the mere working of mental anguish within him, I complied with his desire, and retired. Feeling, however, but little at ease, I devised an excuse for looking in upon him about one hour and a half after I had left him. I knocked gently at his door; there was no answer. I knocked louder; still no answer. I went in. The light of day was gone, and I could see nothing. But I was alarmed by the utter stillness of the room. I listened earnestly, but not a breath could be heard. I rushed back hastily into the hall for a lamp; I returned; I looked in upon this marvel of manly beauty, and the first glance informed me that he and all his splendid endowments had departed for ever. He had died, probably, soon after I left him, and had dismissed me from some growing instinct which informed him that his last agonies were at hand.

I took up his two testamentary documents; both were addressed in the shape of letters to myself. The first was a rapid, though distinct, appropriation of his enormous property. General rules were laid down upon which the property was to be distributed, but the details were left to my discretion, and to the guidance of circumstances as they should happen to emerge from the various inquiries which it would become necessary to set on foot. This first document I soon laid aside, both because I found that its provisions were dependent for their meaning upon the second, and because to this second document I looked with confidence for a solution of many mysteries—of the profound sadness which had, from the first of my acquaintance with him, possessed a man so gorgeously endowed as the favourite of nature and fortune—of his motives for huddling up, in a clandestine manner, that connexion which formed the glory of his life—and possibly (but then I hesitated) of the late unintelligible murders, which still lay under as profound a cloud as ever. Much of this *would* be unveiled—all might

be ; and there and then, with the corpse lying beside me of the gifted and mysterious writer, I seated myself, and read the following statement :—

"*March* 26, 1817.

"My trial is finished ; my conscience, my duty, my honour, are liberated ; my 'warfare is accomplished.' Margaret, my innocent young wife, I have seen for the last time. Her, the crown that might have been of my earthly felicity—her, the one temptation to put aside the bitter cup which awaited me—her, sole seductress (O innocent seductress !) from the stern duties which my fate had imposed upon me—her, even her, I have sacrificed.

"Before I go, partly lest the innocent should be brought into question for acts almost exclusively mine, but still more lest the lesson and the warning which God, by my hand, has written in blood upon your guilty walls, should perish for want of its authentic exposition, hear my last dying avowal, that the murders which have desolated so many families within your walls, and made the household hearth no sanctuary, age no charter of protection, are all due originally to my head, if not always to my hand, as the minister of a dreadful retribution.

"That account of my history and my prospects which you received from the Russian diplomatist, amongst some errors of little importance, is essentially correct. My father was not so immediately connected with English blood as is there represented. However, it is true that he claimed descent from an English family of even higher distinction than that which is assigned in the Russian statement. He was proud of this English descent, and the more so as the war with Revolutionary France brought out more prominently than ever the moral and civil grandeur of England. This pride was generous, but it was imprudent in his situation ; his immediate progenitors had been settled in Italy—at Rome first, but latterly at Milan ; and his whole property, large and scattered, came, by the progress of the Revolution, to stand under French domination. Many spoliations he suffered ; still he was too rich to be seriously injured. But he foresaw, in the progress of events, still greater perils menacing his most capital resources. Many of

the states or princes in Italy were deeply in his debt; and, in the great convulsions which threatened his country, he saw that both the contending parties would find a colourable excuse for absolving themselves from engagements which pressed unpleasantly upon their finances. In this embarrassment he formed an intimacy with a French officer of high rank and high principle. My father's friend saw his danger, and advised him to enter the French service. In his younger days my father had served extensively under many princes, and had found in every other military service a spirit of honour governing the conduct of the officers; here only, and for the first time, he found ruffian manners and universal rapacity. He could not draw his sword in company with such men, nor in such a cause. But at length, under the pressure of necessity, he accepted (or rather bought with an immense bribe) the place of a commissary to the French forces in Italy. With this one resource, eventually he succeeded in making good the whole of his public claims upon the Italian States. These vast sums he remitted, through various channels, to England, where he became a proprietor in the funds to an immense amount. Incautiously, however, something of this transpired, and the result was doubly unfortunate; for, whilst his intentions were thus made known as finally pointing to England, which of itself made him an object of hatred and suspicion, it also diminished his means of bribery. These considerations, along with another, made some French officers of high rank and influence the bitter enemies of my father. My mother, whom he had married when holding a brigadier-general's commission in the Austrian service, was, by birth and by religion, a Jewess. She was of exquisite beauty, and had been sought in morganatic marriage by an archduke of the Austrian family; but she had relied upon this plea, that hers was the purest and noblest blood amongst all Jewish families; that her family traced themselves, by tradition and a vast series of attestations under the hands of the Jewish high-priests, to the Maccabees, and to the royal houses of Judea: and that for her it would be a degradation to accept even of a sovereign prince on the terms of such marriage. This was no vain pretension of ostentatious vanity. It was one which

had been admitted as valid for time immemorial in Transylvania and adjacent countries, where my mother's family were rich and honoured, and took their seat amongst the dignitaries of the land. The French officers I have alluded to, without capacity for anything so dignified as a deep passion, but merely in pursuit of a vagrant fancy that would, on the next day, have given place to another equally fleeting, had dared to insult my mother with proposals the most licentious—proposals as much below her rank and birth as, at any rate, they would have been below her dignity of mind and her purity. These she had communicated to my father, who bitterly resented the chains of subordination which tied up his hands from avenging his injuries. Still his eye told a tale which his superiors could brook as little as they could the disdainful neglect of his wife. More than one had been concerned in the injuries to my father and mother; more than one was interested in obtaining revenge. Things could be done in German towns, and by favour of old German laws or usages, which even in France could not have been tolerated. This my father's enemies well knew, but this my father also knew; and he endeavoured to lay down his office of commissary. That, however, was a favour which he could not obtain. He was compelled to serve on the German campaign then commencing, and on the subsequent one of Friedland and Eylau. Here he was caught in some one of the snares laid for him; first trepanned into an act which violated some rule of the service; and then provoked into a breach of discipline against the general officer who had thus trepanned him. Now was the long-sought opportunity gained, and in that very quarter of Germany best fitted for improving it. My father was thrown into prison in your city, subjected to the atrocious oppression of your jailor, and the more detestable oppression of your local laws. The charges against him were thought even to affect his life, and he was humbled into suing for permission to send for his wife and children. Already, to his proud spirit, it was punishment enough that he should be reduced to sue for favour to one of his bitterest foes. But it was no part of their plan to refuse *that*. By way of expediting my mother's arrival, a military courier, with every facility for the

journey, was forwarded to her without delay. My mother, her two daughters, and myself, were then residing in Venice. I had, through the aid of my father's connexions in Austria, been appointed in the imperial service, and held a high commission for my age. But, on my father's marching northwards with the French army, I had been recalled as an indispensable support to my mother. Not that my years could have made me such, for I had barely accomplished my twelfth year ; but my premature growth, and my military station, had given me considerable knowledge of the world and presence of mind.

"Our journey I pass over ; but, as I approach your city, that sepulchre of honour and happiness to my poor family, my heart beats with frantic emotions. Never do I see that venerable dome of your minster from the forest but I curse its form, which reminds me of what we then surveyed for many a mile as we traversed the forest. For leagues before we approached the city, this object lay before us in relief upon the frosty blue sky ; and still it seemed never to increase. Such was the complaint of my little sister Mariamne. Most innocent child ! would that it never had increased for thy eyes, but remained for ever at a distance ! That same hour began the series of monstrous indignities which terminated the career of my ill-fated family. As we drew up to the city gates, the officer who inspected the passports, finding my mother and sisters described as Jewesses,—which in my mother's ears (reared in a region where Jews are not dishonoured) always sounded a title of distinction,—summoned a subordinate agent, who in coarse terms demanded his toll. We presumed this to be a road-tax for the carriage and horses, but we were quickly undeceived ; a small sum was demanded for each of my sisters and my mother, as for so many head of cattle. I, fancying some mistake, spoke to the man temperately, and, to do him justice, he did not seem desirous of insulting us ; but he produced a printed board, on which, along with the vilest animals, Jews and Jewesses were rated at so much a head. Whilst we were debating the point, the officers of the gate wore a sneering smile upon their faces ; the postilions were laughing together ; and this, too, in the presence of three creatures whose exquisite beauty,

in different styles agreeably to their different ages, would have caused noblemen to have fallen down and worshipped. My mother, who had never yet met with any flagrant insult on account of her national distinctions, was too much shocked to be capable of speaking. I whispered to her a few words, recalling her to her native dignity of mind, paid the money, and we drove to the prison. But the hour was past at which we could be admitted, and, as Jewesses, my mother and sisters could not be allowed to stay in the city; they were to go into the Jewish quarter, a part of the suburb set apart for Jews, in which it was scarcely possible to obtain a lodging tolerably clean. My father, on the next day, we found, to our horror, at the point of death. To my mother he did not tell the worst of what he had endured. To me he told that, driven to madness by the insults offered to him, he had upbraided the court-martial with their corrupt propensities, and had even mentioned that overtures had been made to him for quashing the proceedings in return for a sum of two millions of francs; and that his sole reason for not entertaining the proposal was his distrust of those who made it. 'They would have taken my money,' said he, 'and then found a pretext for putting me to death—that I might tell no secrets.' This was too near the truth to be tolerated. In concert with the local authorities, the military enemies of my father conspired against him, witnesses were suborned; and, finally, under some antiquated law of the place, he was subjected in secret to a mode of torture which still lingers in the east of Europe.

"He sank under the torture and the degradation. I too thoughtlessly—but by a natural movement of filial indignation—suffered the truth to escape me in conversing with my mother. And she ——; but I will preserve the regular succession of things. My father died; but he had taken such measures, in concert with me, that his enemies should never benefit by his property. Meantime my mother and sisters had closed my father's eyes; had attended his remains to the grave; and, in every act connected with this last sad rite, had met with insults and degradations too mighty for human patience. My mother, now become incapable of self-command, in the fury of her righteous grief publicly and in

court denounced the conduct of the magistracy; taxed some of them with the vilest proposals to herself; taxed them as a body with having used instruments of torture upon my father; and finally, accused them of collusion with the French military oppressors of the district. This last was a charge under which they quailed, for by that time the French had made themselves odious to all who retained a spark of patriotic feeling. My heart sank within me when I looked up at the bench, this tribunal of tyrants, all purple or livid with rage; when I looked at them alternately, and at my noble mother with her weeping daughters—these so powerless, those so basely vindictive, and locally so omnipotent. Willingly I would have sacrificed all my wealth for a simple permission to quit this infernal city with my poor female relations, safe and undishonoured. But far other were the intentions of that incensed magistracy. My mother was arrested, charged with some offence equal to petty treason, or *scandalum magnatum*, or the sowing of sedition; and, though what she said was true, where, alas! was she to look for evidence? Here was seen the want of gentlemen. Gentlemen, had they been even equally tyrannical, would have recoiled with shame from taking vengeance on a woman. And what a vengeance! O heavenly powers! that I should live to mention such a thing! Man that is born of woman, to inflict upon woman personal scourging on the bare back, and through the streets at noonday! Even for Christian women the punishment was severe which the laws assigned to the offence in question. But for Jewesses, by one of the ancient laws against that persecuted people, far heavier and more degrading punishments were annexed to almost every offence. What else could be looked for in a city which welcomed its Jewish guests by valuing them at its gates as brute beasts? Sentence was passed, and the punishment was to be inflicted on two separate days, with an interval between each, doubtless to prolong the tortures of mind, but under a vile pretence of alleviating the physical torture. Three days after would come the first day of punishment. My mother spent the time in reading her native Scriptures. She spent it in prayer and in musing, whilst her daughters clung and wept around her day and night—grovelling on

the ground at the feet of any people in authority that entered their mother's cell. That same interval—how was it passed by me? Now mark, my friend. Every man in office, or that could be presumed to bear the slightest influence—every wife, mother, sister, daughter, of such men, I besieged morning, noon, and night. I wearied them with my supplications. I humbled myself to the dust. I, the haughtiest of God's creatures, knelt and prayed to them for the sake of my mother. I besought them that I might undergo the punishment ten times over in her stead. And once or twice I *did* obtain the encouragement of a few natural tears—given more, however, as I was told, to my piety than to my mother's deserts. But rarely was I heard out with patience, and from some houses repelled with personal indignities. The day came! I saw my mother half undressed by the base officials—I heard the prison gates expand—I heard the trumpets of the magistracy sound! She had warned me what to do. I had warned myself. Would I sacrifice a retribution sacred and comprehensive for the momentary triumph over an individual? If not, let me forbear to look out of doors; for I felt that, in the self-same moment in which I saw the dog of an executioner raise his accursed hand against my mother, swifter than the lightning would my dagger search his heart. When I heard the roar of the cruel mob, I paused; endured; forbore. I stole out by by-lanes of the city from my poor exhausted sisters, whom I left sleeping in each other's innocent arms, into the forest. There I listened to the shouting populace: there even I fancied that I could trace my poor mother's route by the course of the triumphant cries. There, even then, even then, I made—oh! silent forest, thou heard'st me when I made—a vow that I have kept too faithfully. Mother, thou art avenged! Sleep, daughter of Jerusalem; for at length the oppressor sleeps with thee!—and thy poor son has paid, in discharge of his vow, the forfeit of his own happiness—of a Paradise opening upon earth—of a heart as innocent as thine, and a face as fair!

"I returned, and found my mother returned. She slept by starts, but she was feverish and agitated; and, when she awoke and first saw me, she blushed, as if I could think that

real degradation had settled upon her. Then it was that I told her of my vow. Her eyes were lambent with fierce light for a moment; but, when I went on more eagerly to speak of my hopes and projects, she called me to her, kissed me, and whispered—'Oh, not so, my son. Think not of me; think not of vengeance; think only of poor Berenice and Mariamne.' Ay, that thought *was* startling. Yet this magnanimous and forbearing mother, as I knew by the report of our one faithful female servant, had in the morning, during her bitter trial, behaved as might have become a daughter of Judas Maccabæus. She had looked serenely upon the vile mob, and awed even them by her serenity. She had disdained to utter a shriek when the cruel lash fell upon her fair skin. There is a point that makes the triumph over natural feelings of pain easy or not easy—the degree in which we count upon the sympathy of the bystanders. My mother had it not in the beginning; but, long before the end, her celestial beauty, the divinity of injured innocence, the pleading of common womanhood in the minds of the lowest class, and the reaction of manly feeling in the men, had worked a great change in the mob. Some began now to threaten those who had been active in insulting her: the silence of awe and respect succeeded to noise and uproar; and feelings which they scarcely understood mastered the rude rabble as they witnessed more and more the patient fortitude of the sufferer. Menaces began to rise towards the executioner. Things wore such an aspect that the magistrates put a sudden end to the scene.

"That day we received permission to go home to our poor house in the Jewish quarter. I know not whether you are learned enough in Jewish usages to be aware that in every Jewish house, where old traditions are kept up, there is one room consecrated to confusion; a room always locked up and sequestered from vulgar use, except on occasions of memorable affliction,—where everything is purposely in disorder, broken, shattered, mutilated,—to typify, by symbols appalling to the eye, that desolation which has so long trampled on Jerusalem, and the ravages of the boar within the vineyards of Judea. My mother, as a Hebrew princess, maintained all traditional customs; even in this

wretched suburb she had her "chamber of desolation." There it was that I and my sisters heard her last words. The rest of her sentence was to be carried into effect within a week. She, meantime, had disdained to utter any word of fear; but that energy of self-control had made the suffering but the more bitter. Fever and dreadful agitation had succeeded. Her dreams showed sufficiently to us, who watched her couch, that terror for the future mingled with the sense of degradation for the past. Nature asserted her rights. But, the more she shrank from the suffering, the more did she proclaim how severe it had been, and consequently how noble the self-conquest. Yet, as her weakness increased, so did her terror; until I besought her to take comfort, assuring her that, in case any attempt should be made to force her out again to public exposure, I would kill the man who came to execute the order—that we would all die together—and there would be a common end to her injuries and her fears. She was reassured by what I told her of my belief that no future attempt would be made upon her. She slept more tranquilly; but her fever increased; and slowly she slept away into the everlasting sleep which knows of no to-morrow.

"Here came a crisis in my fate. Should I stay and attempt to protect my sisters? But, alas! what power had I to do so amongst our enemies? Rachel and I consulted; and many a scheme we planned. Even whilst we consulted, and the very night after my mother had been committed to the Jewish burying-ground, came an officer, bearing an order for me to repair to Vienna. Some officer in the French army, having watched the transaction respecting my parents, was filled with shame and grief. He wrote a statement of the whole to an Austrian officer of rank, my father's friend, who obtained from the Emperor an order claiming me as a page of his own and an officer in the household service. O heavens! what a neglect that it did not include my sisters! However, the next best thing was that I should use my influence at the imperial court to get them passed to Vienna. This I did, to the utmost of my power. But seven months elapsed before I saw the Emperor. If my applications ever met his eye he might readily suppose that your city, my

friend, was as safe a place as another for my sisters. Nor did I myself know all its dangers. At length, with the Emperor's leave of absence, I returned. And what did I find? Eight months had passed, and the faithful Rachel had died. The poor sisters, clinging together, but now utterly bereft of friends, knew not which way to turn. In this abandonment they fell into the insidious hands of the ruffian jailor. My eldest sister, Berenice, the stateliest and noblest of beauties, had attracted this ruffian's admiration whilst she was in the prison with her mother. And, when I returned to your city, armed with the imperial passports for all, I found that Berenice had died in the villain's custody; nor could I obtain anything beyond a legal certificate of her death. And, finally, the blooming, laughing Mariamne, she also had died—and of affliction for the loss of her sister. You, my friend, had been absent upon your travels during the calamitous history I have recited. You had seen neither my father nor my mother. But you came in time to take under your protection, from the abhorred wretch the jailor, my little broken-hearted Mariamne. And, when sometimes you fancied that you had seen me under other circumstances, in her it was, my dear friend, and in her features that you saw mine.

"Now was the world a desert to me. I cared little, in the way of love, which way I turned. But in the way of hatred I cared everything. I transferred myself to the Russian service, with the view of gaining some appointment on the Polish frontier which might put it in my power to execute my vow of destroying all the magistrates of your city. War, however, raged, and carried me into far other regions. It ceased, and there was little prospect that another generation would see it relighted; the kettle-drums and trumpets of Waterloo had by this time been heard in heaven; for the disturber of peace was a prisoner; and all nations were exhausted. Now, then, it became necessary that I should adopt some new mode for executing my vengeance; and the more so because annually some were dying of those whom it was my mission to punish. A voice ascended to me, day and night, from the graves of my father and mother, calling for vengeance before it should be too late. I

took my measures thus:—Many Jews were present at Waterloo. From amongst these, all irritated against Napoleon for the expectations he had raised, only to disappoint, by his great assembly of Jews at Paris, I selected eight, whom I knew familiarly as men hardened by military experience against the movements of pity. With these as my beagles, I hunted for some time in your forest before opening my regular campaign; and I am surprised that you did not hear of the death which met the executioner,—him I mean who dared to lift his hand against my mother. This man I met by accident in the forest; and I slew him. I talked with the wretch as a stranger at first upon the memorable case of the Jewish lady. Had he relented, had he expressed compunction, *I* might have relented. But far otherwise; the dog, not dreaming to whom he spoke, exulted; he ——. But why repeat the villain's words? I cut him to pieces. Next I did this: my agents I caused to matriculate separately at the college. They assumed the college dress. And now mark the solution of that mystery which caused such perplexity. Simply as students we all had an unsuspected admission at any house. Just then there was a common practice, as you will remember, amongst the younger students, of going out a-masking,—that is, of entering houses in the academic dress and with the face masked. This practice subsisted even during the most intense alarm from the murderers; for the dress of the students was supposed to bring protection along with it. But even after suspicion had connected itself with this dress it was sufficient that I should appear unmasked at the head of the maskers, to insure them a friendly reception. Hence the facility with which death was inflicted, and that unaccountable absence of any motion towards an alarm. I took hold of my victim, and he looked at me with smiling security. Our weapons were hid under our academic robes; and, even when we drew them out, and at the moment of applying them to the throat, they still supposed our gestures to be part of the pantomime we were performing. Did I relish this abuse of personal confidence in myself? No—I loathed it, and I grieved for its necessity; but my mother, a phantom not seen with bodily eyes, but

ever present to my mind, continually ascended before me; and still I shouted aloud to my astounded victim, 'This comes from the Jewess! Hound of hounds! Do you remember the Jewess whom you dishonoured, and the oaths which you broke in order that you might dishonour her, and the righteous law which you violated, and the cry of anguish from her son, which you scoffed at?' Who I was, what I avenged, and whom, I made every man aware, and every woman, before I punished them. The details of the cases I need not repeat. One or two I was obliged, at the beginning, to commit to my Jews. The suspicion was thus, from the first, turned aside by the notoriety of my presence elsewhere; but I took care that none suffered who had not either been upon the guilty list of magistrates who condemned the mother, or of those who turned away with mockery from the supplication of the son.

"It pleased God, however, to place a mighty temptation in my path, which might have persuaded me to forgo all thoughts of vengeance, to forget my vow, to forget the voices which invoked me from the grave. This was Margaret Liebenheim. Ah! how terrific appeared my duty of bloody retribution, after her angel's face and angel's voice had calmed me. With respect to her grandfather, strange it is to mention that never did my innocent wife appear so lovely as precisely in the relation of grand-daughter. So beautiful was her goodness to the old man, and so divine was the childlike innocence on her part, contrasted with the guilty recollections associated with him—for he was amongst the guiltiest towards my mother—still I delayed *his* punishment to the last; and, for his child's sake, I would have pardoned him—nay, I had resolved to do so, when a fierce Jew, who had a deep malignity towards this man, swore that he would accomplish *his* vengeance at all events, and perhaps might be obliged to include Margaret in the ruin unless I adhered to the original scheme. Then I yielded; for circumstances armed this man with momentary power. But the night fixed on was one in which I had reason to know that my wife would be absent; for so I had myself arranged with her, and the unhappy counter-arrangement I do not yet understand. Let me add that the sole purpose of my clan-

destine marriage was to sting her grandfather's mind with the belief that *his* family had been dishonoured, even as he had dishonoured mine. He learned, as I took care that he should, that his grand-daughter carried about with her the promises of a mother, and did not know that she had the sanction of a wife. This discovery made him, in one day, become eager for the marriage he had previously opposed; and this discovery also embittered the misery of his death. At that moment I attempted to think only of my mother's wrongs; but, in spite of all I could do, this old man appeared to me in the light of Margaret's grandfather; and, had I been left to myself, he would have been saved. As it was, never was horror equal to mine when I met her flying to his succour. I had relied upon her absence; and the misery of that moment, when her eye fell upon me in the very act of seizing her grandfather, far transcended all else that I have suffered in these terrific scenes. She fainted in my arms, and I and another carried her upstairs and procured water; meantime her grandfather had been murdered even whilst Margaret fainted. I had, however, under the fear of discovery, though never anticipating a rencontre with herself, forestalled the explanation requisite in such a case to make my conduct intelligible. I had told her, under feigned names, the story of my mother and my sisters. She knew their wrongs; she had heard me contend for the right of vengeance. Consequently, in our parting interview, one word only was required to place myself in a new position to her thoughts. I needed only to say I was that son; that mother was mine.

"As to the jailor, he was met by a party of us. Not suspecting that any of us could be connected with the family, he was led to talk of the most hideous details with regard to my poor Berenice. The child had not, as had been insinuated, aided her own degradation, but had nobly sustained the dignity of her sex and her family. Such advantages as the monster pretended to have gained over her—sick, desolate, and latterly delirious—were, by his own confession, not obtained without violence. This was too much. Forty thousand lives, had he possessed them, could not have gratified my thirst for revenge. Yet, had he but showed

courage, he should have died the death of a soldier. But the wretch showed cowardice the most abject, and——but you know his fate.

"Now, then, all is finished, and human nature is avenged. Yet, if you complain of the bloodshed and the terror, think of the wrongs which created my rights; think of the sacrifice by which I gave a tenfold strength to those rights; think of the necessity for a dreadful concussion, and shock to society, in order to carry my lesson into the councils of princes.

"This will now have been effected. And ye, victims of dishonour, will be glorified in your deaths; ye will not have suffered in vain, nor died without a monument. Sleep, therefore, sister Berenice,—sleep, gentle Mariamne, in peace. And thou, noble mother, let the outrages sown in thy dishonour rise again and blossom in wide harvests of honour for the women of thy afflicted race. Sleep, daughters of Jerusalem, in the sanctity of your sufferings. And thou, if if be possible, even more beloved daughter of a Christian fold, whose company was too soon denied to him in life, open thy grave to receive *him* who, in the hour of death, wishes to remember no title which he wore on earth but that of thy chosen and adoring lover,

"MAXIMILIAN."

THE FATAL MARKSMAN[1]

I

"LISTEN, dame," said Bertram, the old forester of Linden, to his wife; "once for all, listen. It's not many things, thou well know'st, that I would deny to thy asking: but, as for this notion, Anne, drive it clean out of thy head; root and branch lay the axe to it; the sooner the better; and never encourage the lass to think more about it. When she knows the worst, she'll settle herself down to her crying; and, when that's over, all's over; she submits, and all goes right. I see no good that comes of standing shilly-shally, and letting the girl nurse herself with hopes of what must not be."

"But, Bertram, dear Bertram," replied old Anne, "why not? could not our Kate live as happily with the bailiff's clerk as with the hunter Robert? Ah, you don't know what a fine lad William is; so good, so kind-hearted——"

"May be, like enough," interrupted Bertram; "kind-hearted, I dare say, but no hunter for all that. Now, look here, Anne: for better than two hundred years has this farm in the Forest of Linden come down from father to child in my family. Hadst thou brought me a son, well and good: the farm would have gone to him; and the lass might have married whom she would. But, as the case

[1] This piece (a translation from the German of J. A. Apel) appeared originally in a three-volume collection of "Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations," published in London in 1823, and was reprinted by De Quincey in 1859 in volume xii of the Collective Edition of his writings. See *ante*, Editor's Preface.—M.

stands,—no, I say. What the devil! have I had all this trouble and vexation of mind to get the duke's allowance for my son-in-law to stand his examination as soon as he is master of the huntsman's business; and, just when all's settled, must I go and throw the girl away? A likely thing, indeed! No, no, mistress Anne, it's no use talking. It's not altogether Robert that I care about. I don't stand upon trifles; and, if the man is not to your taste or the girl's, why, look out any other active huntsman that may take my office betimes, and give us a comfortable fireside in our old age. Robert or not Robert, so that it be a lad of the forest, I'll never stand upon trifles: but for the clerk—dost hear, Anne?—this hero of a crow-quill, never hang about my neck or think to wheedle me again."

For the clerk's sake old Anne would have ventured to wheedle her husband a little longer: but the forester, who knew by experience the pernicious efficacy of female eloquence, was resolved not to expose his own firmness of purpose to any further assaults or trials; and, taking down his gun from the wall, he walked out into the forest.

Scarcely had he turned the corner of the house when a rosy light-haired face looked in at the door. It was Katharine: smiling and blushing, she stopped for a moment in agitation, and said—"Is all right, mother? was it *yes*, dear mother?" Then, bounding into the room, she fell on her mother's neck for an answer.

"Ah, Kate, be not too confident when thou should'st be prepared for the worst: thy father is a good man, as good as ever stepped, but he has his fancies; and he is resolved to give thee to none but a hunter: he has set his heart upon it; and he'll not go from his word: I know him too well."

Katharine wept, and avowed her determination to die sooner than to part from her William. Her mother comforted and scolded her by turns, and at length ended by joining her tears to her daughter's. She was promising to make one more assault of a most vigorous kind upon the old forester's heart, when a knock was heard at the door—and in stepped William. "Ah, William!"—exclaimed Katharine, going up to him with streaming eyes,—"we must

part: seek some other sweetheart: me you must never marry; father is resolved to give me to Robert, because he is a huntsman; and my mother can do nothing for us. But, if I am to part from you, never think that I will belong to anybody else: to my dying hour, dear William, I will remain faithful to you."

These bursts of wounded feeling were softened in the report of the mother: she explained to the bewildered clerk, who knew not what to make of Katharine's ejaculations, that Bertram had no objections to him personally; but that, simply with a view to the reversionary interest in his place as forester, he insisted on having a son-in-law who understood hunting.

"Is that all?" said William, recovering his composure, and at the same time he caught the sobbing girl to his bosom,—"Is that all? Then be of good cheer, dearest Kate. I am not unskilled in hunting: for, at one time, I was apprenticed to my uncle Fintersbusch, the forester-general; and it was only to gratify my godfather the bailiff that I exchanged the gun for the writing-desk. What care I for the reversion of the bailiff's place, unless I may take my Kate into the bailiff's house as mistress? If you can be content to look no higher than your mother did, and Will the forester is not less dear to you than Will the bailiff, then let me die if I won't quit my clerkship this instant; for, in point of pleasure, there's no comparison between the jolly huntsman's life and the formal life of the town."

"Oh! thou dear, kind lad," said Katharine, whilst all the clouds dispersed from her forehead, and her eyes swam in a shower of glittering tears, "if thou wilt do this for my sake then do so, and speak to my father without delay—before he can possibly make any promise to Robert."

"Stay, Kate: I'll go after him this moment into the forest. He's gone in search of the venison, I dare say, that is to be delivered to-morrow into the office. Give me a gun and a pouch: I'll find him out—meet him with a jolly hunter's salutation—and offer my services to him as his hunting-boy."

Both mother and daughter fell upon his neck; helped to

equip the new huntsman to the best of their skill ; and looked after him, as he disappeared in the forest, with hope, but yet with some anxiety.

II

"Upon my soul, but this William's a fine fellow!" exclaimed the forester as he returned home with his comrade from the chase : "Who the deuce would ever have looked for such a good shot in the flourisher of a crow-quill? Well ; to-morrow I shall speak with the bailiff myself ; for it would be a sad pity if he were not to pursue the noble profession of hunting. Why, he'll make a second Kuno. You know who Kuno was, I suppose?" said he, turning to William.

William acknowledged that he did not.

"Not know who Kuno was? bless my soul! to think that I should never have told you that. Why, Kuno, you're to understand, was my great-grandfather's father ; and was the very first man that ever occupied and cultivated this farm. He began the world no better, I'll assure you, than a poor riding-boy ; and lived servant with the young knight of Wippach. Ah ! the knight liked him well, and took him to all places,—battles, tournaments, hunts, and what not. Well, once upon a time it happened that this young gentleman of Wippach was present with many other knights and nobles at a great hunt held by the duke. And in this hunt the dogs turned up a stag, upon which a man was seated wringing his hands and crying piteously; for, in those days, there was a tyrannical custom among the great lords, that, when a poor man had committed any slight matter of trespass against the forest laws, they would take and bind him on the back of a stag, so that he was bruised and gored to death by the herd—or, if he escaped dying that way, he perished of hunger and thirst. Well, when the duke saw this—oh lord ! but he was angry ; and gave command to stop the hunting ; and there and then he promised a high reward to any man that would undertake to hit the stag—but threatened him with his severest displeasure in case he wounded the man ; for he was resolved, if possible, to take him alive—that he might learn who it was that had been

bold enough to break his law, which forbade all such murderous deeds. Now, amongst all the nobility, not a man could be found that would undertake the job on these terms. They liked the reward, mind you, but not the risk. So, at last, who should step forward but Kuno, my own great-grandfather's father—the very man that you see painted in that picture? He spoke up boldly before the duke, and said:—'My noble liege, if it is your pleasure, with God's blessing, I will run the hazard; if I miss, my life is at your grace's disposal, and must pay the forfeit; for riches and worldly goods I have none to ransom it; but I pity the poor man; and, without fee or reward, I would have exposed my life to the same hazard if I had seen him in the hands of enemies or robbers.' This speech pleased the duke; it pleased him right well: and he bade Kuno try his luck; and again he promised him the reward in case he hit; but he did not repeat his threat in case he missed; that was, mind you, lest he should frighten him and make his hand unsteady. Well, Kuno took his gun, cocked it in God's name, and, commending the ball with a pious prayer to the guidance of good angels, he spent no time in taking aim—but fired with a cheerful faith right into the midst of a thicket: in the same moment out rushed the hart, staggered, and fell; but the man was unwounded, except that his hands and face were somewhat scratched by the bushes.

"The noble duke kept his word, and gave Kuno, for his reward, the farm of the forest to himself and his heirs for ever. But, lord bless us! good fortune never wanted envy; and the favour of Providence, as Kuno soon learned, is followed by the jealousy of man. Many a man there was, in those days, who would gladly have had Kuno's reward; one man for himself, perhaps; another for some poor cousin or so, or maybe something nearer of kin, but come of the wrong side the blanket: and what did they do but they persuaded the duke that Kuno's shot had hit the mark through witchcraft and black arts: 'For why?' said they, 'Kuno never took any aim at all, but fired at random "a devil's shot"; and a devil's shot, you're to understand, never fails of hitting the mark; for needs must that the

devil drives.' So hereupon a regulation was made, and from this the custom came, that every descendant of Kuno must undergo a trial, and fire what they call his probationary shot before he is admitted tenant. However, the master of the hounds, before whom the trial takes place, can make it easy or difficult at his own pleasure. When I was admitted, guess what the master required of me: why, from the bill of a wooden bird to shoot out a ring that fastened the bird to a pole. Well, well: up to this time not one of all Kuno's descendants has failed in his trial: and he that would be my son-in-law and a worthy successor to me—let me tell you, William, that man had need to make himself a thorough huntsman."

William, who had listened to this story with lively interest (as the old forester had not failed to remark with much satisfaction), rose from his seat when it was ended, pressed the old man's hand, and promised, under his tuition, to make himself a huntsman such as even old father Kuno should have had no cause to blush for.

III

William had scarcely lived one whole fortnight at the forest house in his capacity of huntsman, when old Bertram, who liked him better every day, gave a formal consent to his marriage with Katharine. This promise, however, was to be kept secret until the day of the probationary shot, when the presence of the ducal master of the hounds would confer a splendour on the ceremony of the betrothing which was flattering to the old man's pride. Meantime the bridegroom-elect passed his time in rapturous elevation of spirits, and forgot himself and all the world in the paradise of youthful love; so that father Bertram often said to him tauntingly that from the day when he had hit his prime aim in obtaining Katharine's heart he had hit nothing else. The fact, however, was, that from that very day William had met with an unaccountable run of ill-luck in hunting. Sometimes his gun would miss fire; at other times, instead of a deer, he would hit the trunk of a tree. Was his hunting-bag emptied on his return home? Instead of partridges out

came daws and crows, and, instead of a hare, perhaps a dead cat. At last the forester began to reproach him in good earnest for his heedlessness ; and Kate herself became anxious for the event of his examination before the duke's commissioner.

William redoubled his attention and diligence ; but, the nearer the day of trial advanced, so much the more was he persecuted by bad luck. Nearly every shot missed ; and at length he grew almost afraid of pulling a trigger for fear of doing some mischief ; for he had already shot a cow at pasture, and narrowly escaped wounding the herdsman.

"Nay, I stick to my own opinion," said huntsman Rudolph one night ; "somebody has cast a spell over William ; for, in the regular course of nature such things could never happen ; and this spell he must undo before ever he'll have any luck."

"Pooh ! pooh ! man, what stuff you talk !" replied Bertram. "This is nothing but superstitious foolery, such as no Christian hunter should ever so much as name. Canst tell me now, my fine fellow, what three articles be those which make an able sportsman's stock in trade ?"

"Ay, my old cock of the woods, I can tell you *that*," said Rudolph clearing his throat, "or else it were a pity :

> 'A dog, a gun, and a skilful hand,
> In the forest are better than house or land.' "

"Good," said Bertram, "and these three together are an overmatch for all the spells in Germany."

"With your leave, father Bertram," replied William, somewhat chagrined, "here is my gun ; and I should be glad to see the man that has any fault to find with *that* : as to my skill, I will not boast of it ; yet I think it can't be denied that I do as well as others : nevertheless, so it is that my balls seem to fly askance, as if the wind turned them out of their course. Do but tell me what it is that I should do, and there is nothing I will not try."

"Strange, indeed !" murmured the forester, who knew not what to say.

"Take my word for it, William," repeated Rudolph,

"it is just what I tell you. Go some Friday at midnight to a cross-road, and make a circle round about you with a ramrod or a bloody sword; bless it three times in the same words as the priest uses, but in the name of Samiel——"

"Hush! hush!" interrupted the forester angrily: "dost know what that name is? why, he's one of Satan's host. God keep thee and all Christians out of his power!"

William crossed himself and would hear no more, however obstinately Rudolph persisted in his opinion. All night long he continued to clean his gun, to examine the screws, the spring, and every part of the lock and barrel; and at break of day he sallied forth to try his luck once more.

IV

But all in vain; his pains were all thrown away; the deer flocked round him almost as it seemed in mockery of his skill. At ten paces distance he levelled at a roebuck; twice his gun flashed in the pan; the third time it went off, but the deer darted off unhurt through the bushes. Cursing his fate, the unhappy hunter threw himself despondingly beneath a tree; at that moment a rustling was heard in the bushes, and out limped an old soldier with a wooden leg.

"Good morning to you, comrade," said the soldier; "why so gloomy, why so gloomy? Is it body or purse that's ailing, health or wealth is it that you're sighing for? Or has somebody put a charm upon your gun? Come, give us a bit of tobacco, and let's have a little chat together."

With a surly air William gave him what he asked for, and the soldier threw himself by his side on the grass. After some desultory discussion, the conversation fell upon hunting, and William related his own bad luck. "Let me see your gun," said the soldier. "Ah! I thought so. This gun has been charmed, and you'll never get a true aim with it again; and more than that, let me tell you, if the charm was laid according to the rules of art, you'll have no better luck with any other gun you take in hand."

William shuddered, and would have urged some objection against the credibility of witchcraft; but the stranger offered to bring the question to a simple test. "To old soldiers, the like of me," said he, "there's nothing at all surprising in it. Bless your soul, I could tell you stories stranger by half from this time to midnight. How do you think the sharp-shooters would come on, that must venture here, there, and everywhere, and must pick off their man from the very heart of the thickest smoke where it's clean impossible to see him—how must they come on, I would be glad to know, if they understood no other trick than just aim and fire? Now here, for instance, is a ball that cannot fail to go true, because it's a gifted ball, and is proof against all the arts of darkness. Just try it now; give it a single trial: I'll answer for it, you'll not find it deceive you; I'll go bail for it."

William loaded his piece, and looked about for an aim. At a great height above the forest, like a moving speck, was hovering a large bird of prey. "There!" said wooden-leg, "that old devil up there, shoot *him*." William laughed, for the bird was floating in a region so elevated as to be scarcely discernible to the naked eye. "Nay, never doubt; shoot away," repeated the old soldier; "I'll wager my wooden leg you'll bring him down." William fired, the black speck was seen rapidly enlarging, and a great vulture fell bleeding to the ground.

"Oh! bless your heart, that's nothing at all," said the soldier, observing the speechless astonishment of his companion; "not worth speaking of. Indeed it's no such great matter to learn how to cast balls as good as these; little more is wanted than some slight matter of skill, and, to be sure, a stout heart; for why? the work must be done in the night. I'll teach you, and welcome, if we should chance to meet again; at present, however, I must be moving, for I've a d—d long march before me to-day, and I hear it just striking seven. Meantime, here's a few braces of my balls for you," and so saying he limped off.

Filled with astonishment, William tried a second of the balls, and again he hit an object at an inaccessible distance; he then charged with his ordinary balls, and missed the

broadest and most obvious mark. On this second trial, he determined to go after the old soldier; but the soldier had disappeared in the depths of the forest, and William was obliged to console himself with the prospect of meeting him again.

V

In the forest house all was joy and triumph when William returned, as formerly, with a load of venison, and gave practical evidence to old Bertram that he was still the same marksman he had first shown himself in his noviciate. He should now have told the reason of his late ill-luck, and what course he had taken to remove it; but, without exactly knowing why, he shrank from telling of the inevitable balls, and laid the blame upon a flaw in his gun, which had escaped his notice until the preceding night.

"Now, dame, dost a' see?" said the forester laughing; "who's wrong now, dame, I wonder? The witchcraft lay in the gun that wanted trimming; and the little devil, that by your account should have thrown down old father Kuno's picture so early this morning, I'm partly of opinion lies in a cankered nail."

"What's that you're saying about a devil?" asked William.

"Nay, nothing at all but nonsense," replied the old man; "this morning, just as the clock was striking seven, the picture fell down of itself, and so my wife will have it that all's not right about the house."

"Just as it was striking seven, eh? Ha!" And across William's thoughts flashed like a fiery arrow the old soldier, who had taken his leave at that identical time.

"Ay, sure enough, as it was striking seven: not a very likely time for devils to be stirring; eh, my old dame? eh, Anne?" at the same time chucking her under the chin with a good-natured laugh. But old Anne shook her head thoughtfully, saying—"God grant all may turn out natural!" and William changed colour a little. He resolved to put by his balls, and, at the most, only to use one upon his day of trial, lest he might be unconsciously trifling away his future happiness at the wily suggestions of a fiend. But the

forester summoned him to attendance upon the chase; and, unless he were prepared to provoke the old man, and to rouse afresh all the late suspicions in regard to his skill, he found himself obliged to throw away some of his charmed balls upon such occasions.

VI

In a few days William had so familiarised himself to the use of his enchanted balls that he no longer regarded it with any misgiving. Every day he roamed about in the forest, hoping to meet the wooden-leg again; for his stock of balls had sunk to a single pair, and the most rigorous parsimony became needful, if he would not put to hazard his final success on the day of trial. One day, therefore, he positively declined attending the old forester a-hunting, for, on the next, the duke's commissioner was expected, and it might so happen that, before the regular probation, he would call for some exhibition of his skill. At night, however, instead of the commissioner, came a messenger from him to bespeak a very large delivery of game for court, and to countermand the preparations for his own reception until that day se'n-night.

On the receipt of this news William was ready to sink to the ground; and his alarm would certainly have raised suspicions had it not been ascribed to the delay of his marriage. He was now under the necessity of going out to hunt, and of sacrificing at least one of his balls; with the other he vowed to himself that he would not part for any purpose on earth, except for the final shot before the commissioner which was to decide his fate for life.

Bertram scolded when William came back from the forest with only a single buck; for the quantity of venison ordered was very considerable. Next day he was still more provoked on seeing Rudolph return loaded with game and William with an empty bag. At night he threatened to dismiss him from his house, and to revoke the consent he had given to his marriage with Katharine, unless he brought home at least two roe-deer on the following morning. Katharine herself was in the greatest distress, and conjured him for love of her

to apply his utmost zeal, and not to think so much about her whilst engaged in hunting.

In a despairing mood William set off to the forest. Kate, in any case, he looked upon as lost; and all that remained for him was a sad alternative between the two modes of losing her,—whether by the result of this day's hunting, or of the trial before the commissioner. This was an alternative on which he felt himself incapable of deciding; and he was standing lost in gloomy contemplation of his wretched fate, when all at once a troop of deer advanced close upon him. Mechanically he felt for his last ball; it seemed to weigh a hundredweight in his hands. Already he had resolved to reserve this treasure at any price, when suddenly he saw the old wooden-leg at a distance, and apparently directing his steps towards himself. Joyfully he dropped his ball into the barrel, fired, and two roebucks fell to the ground. William left them lying, and hurried after the wooden-leg; but he must have struck into some other path, for he had wholly disappeared.

VII

Father Bertram was well satisfied with William; but not so was William with himself. The whole day long he went about in gloomy despondency; and even the tenderness and caresses of Kate had no power to restore him to serenity. At nightfall he was still buried in abstraction; and, seated in a chair, he hardly noticed the lively conversation between the forester and Rudolph, till at length the former woke him out of his reverie.

"What, William, I say," cried Bertram, "sure you'll never sit by and hearken quietly whilst such scandalous things are said as Rudolph has just been saying of our forefather Kuno? I'm sure, I won't. If good angels stood by, and gave help to him and to the poor innocent man on the stag's back, why nothing but right: we read of such cases in the Old Testament; and let us thank God for that and all his mercies and marvels: but, as to black arts and devil's shots, I'll not sit and hear such things said of our Kuno. What, man? Kuno died in his bed quietly, and with a Christian's peace, amongst his children and children's children; but the man that

tampers with the powers of darkness never makes a good end. I know *that* by what I saw myself at Prague in Bohemia, when I was an apprentice lad."

"Ay! what was that?" cried Rudolph and the rest: "tell us, dear father."

"What was it? why, bad enough," said Bertram; "it makes me shudder when I think of it. There was at that time a young man in Prague, one George Smith by name, a wild, daring sort of a fellow,—not but he was a fine, active lad in his way,—that was terribly fond of hunting, and would often come and join us; indeed, I may say, whenever he could. And a very fair hunter he might have proved; but he was too hasty by far, and flung his shots away in a manner. One day, when we had been joking him on this, his pride mounted so high that nothing would serve him but he must defy all the hunters in a body: he would beat any of them at shooting; and no game should escape him, whether in the air or in the forest. This was his boast; but ill he kept his word. Two days after comes a strange huntsman bolt upon us out of a thicket, and tells us that a little way off, on the main road, a man was lying half dead, and with nobody to look after him. We lads made up to the spot, and there, sure enough, lay poor George, torn and clawed all to pieces, just as if he had fallen amongst wild-cats: not a word could he speak; for he was quite senseless, and hardly showed any signs of life. We carried him to a house: one of us set off with the news to Prague; and thither he was soon fetched. Well, this George Smith, before he died, made confession that he had set about casting devil's balls with an old upland hunter. Devil's balls, you understand, never miss; and, because he failed in something that he should have done, the devil had handled him so roughly that what must pay for it but his precious life?"

"What was it, then, that he failed in?" asked William falteringly. "Is it always the devil that is at work in such dealings?"

"Why, who should it be?" rejoined the forester: "the devil, to be sure, who else? Some people I've heard talk of hidden powers of nature, and of the virtue of the stars. I know not: every man's free to think what he likes; but

it's my opinion, and I stick to it, that it's all the devil's handicraft."

William drew his breath more freely. "But did George not relate what it was that brought such rough treatment upon him?"

"Ay, sure enough, before the magistrates he confessed all. As it drew towards midnight, it seems, he had gone with the old hunter to a cross-road: there they made a circle with a bloody sword; and in this circle they laid a skull and bones crossways. Then the old man told George what he was to do. On the stroke of eleven, he was to begin casting the balls, in number sixty-and-three, neither more nor less: one over or one under, as soon as twelve o'clock struck, he was a lost man. And during all this work he was not to speak a word, nor to step out of the circle, let what would happen. Sixty of the balls were to carry true, and only three were to miss. Well, sure enough, Smith began casting the balls; but such shocking and hideous apparitions flocked about him that at last he shrieked out and jumped right out of the circle. Instantly he fell down senseless to the ground, and never recovered his recollection till he found himself at Prague, as if waking out of a dream, in the hands of the surgeon, and with a clergyman by his side."

"God preserve all Christian people from such snares of Satan!" said the forester's wife, crossing herself.

"Had George, then," asked Rudolph, "made a regular contract with the devil?"

"Why, that's more than I'll undertake to say," replied Bertram; "for it is written, 'Judge not.' But, let that be as it will, it can be no slight matter of a sin for a man to meddle with things that bring the Evil One about him, and may, for aught he knows, give him power over body and soul. Satan is ready enough to come of himself, without any man's needing to summon him, or to make bargains with him. Besides, what need of any such help for a good Christian hunter? *You* know *that*, William, by your own experience: with a good gun and a skilful hand, the hunter wants no devil's balls, but hits just where he *should* hit. For my part, if I had such balls, I wouldn't fire them for any money; for the fiend is a wily devil, and might upon

occasion give the ball a sly twist in its course, to serve *his* purposes instead of mine."

VIII

The forester went to bed, and left William in the most wretched state of agitation. In vain he threw himself on his bed; sound sleep fled from his eyes. The delirium of a heated fancy presented to his eyes, by turns, in confused groups, the old wooden-legged soldier, George, Katharine, and the ducal commissioner. Now the unfortunate boy of Prague held up his hand before him, as a bloody memento of warning: then in a moment his threatening aspect would change into the face of Kate, fainting and pale as death; and near her stood the wooden-leg, his countenance overspread with a fiendish laugh of mockery. At another time he was standing before the commissioner in the act of firing his probationary shot; he levelled, took aim, fired, and—missed. Katharine fainted away, her father rejected him for ever; then came the wooden-leg, and presented him with fresh balls; but too late—no second trial was allowed him.

So passed the night with William. At the earliest dawn he went into the forest, and bent his steps, not altogether without design, to the spot where he had met the old soldier. The fresh breezy air of the morning had chased away from his mind the gloomy phantoms of the night. "Fool!" said he to himself, "because a mystery is above thy comprehension, must it therefore be from hell? And what is there so much out of the course of nature in that which I am seeking, that supernatural powers need come to help me? Man controls the mighty powers of the brute into obedience to his will; why should he not, by the same natural arts, impress motion and direction upon the course of a bit of lifeless inert metal? Nature teems with operations which we do not comprehend: and am I to trifle away my happiness for a superannuated prejudice? I will call up no spiritual beings, but I will summon and make use of the occult powers of nature, never troubling myself whether I can decipher her mysteries or not. I will go in quest of the old soldier, and, if I should not find him, I will take care to keep up my courage better

than that same George of Prague ; he was urged on by pride ; but I by the voice of love and honour."

In this manner did William discuss his own intentions : but the old soldier was nowhere to be found. Nobody of whom he inquired had seen any such man as he described. The next day was spent in the same search, and with no better success.

" So be it, then ! " said William internally : " the days that remain for my purpose are numbered. This very night I will go to the cross-road in the forest. It is a lonely spot ; nobody will be there to witness my nocturnal labours : and I'll take care not to quit the circle till my work is done."

IX

Twilight had set in ; and William had provided himself with lead, bullet-mould, coals, and all other requisites, that he might be ready to slip out of the house unobserved immediately after supper. He was just on the point of departing, and had already wished the forester a good night, when the latter stopped him, and took his hand.

" William," said he, " I know not what is to come to me, but so it is that this evening I have an awe upon my mind, as if from some danger, God knows what, hanging over me. Oblige me by staying this night with me. Don't look so cast down, my lad ; its only to guard against possibilities."

Katharine immediately offered her services to sit up with her father, and was unwilling to intrust the care of him to anybody else, even to her own William ; but father Bertram declined her offer. — " Another time," said he, " another time ; to-night I feel as if I should be easier if I had William with me."

William was disposed at first to excuse himself : but Kate commended her father so earnestly to his care that her requests were not to be resisted ; and he staid with a good grace, and put off the execution of his plan until the succeeding night.

After midnight the old forester became tranquil, and slept soundly, so that, on the following morning, he laughed at his own fears. He would have gone with William into

the forest; but William still clung to the hope of meeting his mysterious acquaintance with the wooden leg, and therefore opposed his wishes with a plausible pretext about his health. The wooden-leg, however, never appeared; and William a second time resolved on the nocturnal expedition to the cross road.

At night, when he came back from the forest, Katharine ran out joyfully to meet him.—"Guess, William, only guess," she cried, "who it is that is come. There is a visitor for you, a right dear visitor; but I will not say who, for you must guess."

William had no mind for guessing, and still less for seeing visitors. On this day the dearest in the world would have seemed in his eyes a troublesome intruder. He shrank gloomily from Katharine's welcome, and thought of turning back upon some pretence; but at that moment the house door opened, and the light of the moon discovered a venerable old man in a hunter's dress, who stepped forwards and stretched out his arms to William.

"William!" exclaimed a well-known voice, and William found himself in the arms of his uncle. A world of affecting remembrances, from the days of childhood—remembrances of love, of joy, and of gratitude, pressed with the weight of magic upon William's heart: amidst these his midnight purpose slipped away from his thoughts: and it was in the middle of the gayest conversation, upon the clock striking twelve, that William was first reminded with horror of the business he had neglected.

"Just one night more," thought he, "one single night remains: to-morrow, or never!" His violent agitation did not escape his uncle's notice; but the old man ascribed it to some little weariness in his nephew, and good-naturedly apologised for having engaged him so long in conversation, by pleading his early departure, which he could not possibly put off beyond the first dawn of the next morning.

"Think not much of an odd hour or two thrown away," said he to William on separating; "may be you'll sleep all the better for it."

These last words had a deeper import to William's thoughts than could possibly have been meant by his uncle.

He saw in them an obscure allusion to his nocturnal plans; which, once executed, might (as he foreboded) chase away from him for ever the comfort of tranquil slumbers.

X

The third night came. Whatever was to be done must be done on this day, for the next was the day of trial. From morning to night had old Anne, with her daughter Kate, bustled about the house, to make arrangements for the suitable reception of her dignified guest, the commissioner. At nightfall everything was ready, and in the most becoming order. Anne embraced William on his return from the forest, and for the first time saluted him with the endearing name of son. The eyes of Kate sparkled with the tender emotions of a youthful bride[1]—that loves, and is beloved. The table was decked with festal flowers, and such as rural usage has appropriated, by way of emblems, to the occasion: viands more luxurious than usual were brought out by the mother; and bottles of choice old wine by the father.

"This night," said Bertram, "we will keep the bridal feast: to-morrow we shall not be alone, and cannot, therefore, sit so confidentially and affectionately together; let us be happy then—as happy as if all the pleasure of our lives were to be crowded into this one night."

The forester embraced his family, and was deeply moved. "But, Bertram," said his wife, "let us be as happy as we will to-night, I've a notion the young people will be happier to-morrow. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes, love, I know what you mean; and let the children know it also, that they may enjoy their happiness beforehand. Do you hear, children? The vicar is invited to-morrow; and as soon as William has passed his examination——"

At this moment a rattling noise and a loud cry from Katharine interrupted the forester's speech. Kuno's portrait had again fallen from the wall, and a corner of the frame

[1] *Bride*:—*We* call no woman a bride until she is irrevocably married. But in Germany she then *ceases* to be a bride. The *Braut* is she that is affianced; which sometimes she is for years. But this betrothal, which makes her a bride, is swallowed up by her nuptials.

had wounded Katharine on the temples. The nail appeared to have been fixed too loosely in the wall, for it fell after the picture, and brought away part of the plaster. "What, in God's name, can be the reason," said Bertram with vexation, "that this picture can't be made to hang as it should do? This now is the second time that it has alarmed us. Katy, my love, art any worse?"

"No, not at all," said she, cheerfully, and wiping the blood from her tresses, "but I was sadly frightened."

William was thrown into dreadful agitation when he beheld the death-pale countenance of Kate, and the blood upon her temples. Just so had she appeared to him on the night of his hideous visions; and all the sad images of that memorable night now revived upon his mind, and tormented him afresh. The violent shock tended greatly to stagger him in his plans for the night; but the wine, which he drank in large draughts, and more hastily than usual, for the purpose of hiding his anguish, filled him with a frantic spirit of hardihood: he resolved afresh to make the attempt boldly; and no longer saw anything in his purpose but the honourable spectacle of love and courage struggling with danger.

The clock struck nine. William's heart beat violently. He sought for some pretext for withdrawing, but in vain. What pretext could a man find for quitting his young bride on their bridal festival? Time flew faster than an arrow: in the arms of love, that should have crowned him with happiness, he suffered the pangs of martyrdom. Ten o'clock was now past, and the decisive moment was at hand. Without taking leave, William stole away from the side of his bride; already he was outside the house with his implements of labour, when old Anne came after him. "Whither away, William, at this time of night?" asked she anxiously. "I shot a deer, and forgot it in my hurry," was the answer. In vain she begged him to stay: all her entreaties were flung away, and even the tender caresses of Kate, whose mind misgave her that some mystery lay buried in his hurry and agitation. William tore himself from them both, and hastened to the forest.

XI

The moon was in the wane, and at this time was rising, and resting with a dim red orb upon the horizon. Gloomy clouds were flying overhead, and at intervals darkened the whole country, which, by fits, the moon again lit up. The silvery birches and the aspen trees rose like apparitions in the forest; and the poplars seemed, to William's fevered vision, pale shadowy forms that beckoned him to retire. He shuddered; and it suddenly struck him that the almost miraculous disturbance of his scheme on the two preceding nights, together with the repeated and ominous falling of the picture, were the last warnings of dissuasion from a wicked enterprise, addressed to him by his better angel that was now ready to forsake him.

Once again he faltered in his purpose. Already he was on the point of returning, when suddenly a voice appeared to whisper to him: "Fool! hast thou not already accepted magical help; is it only for the trouble of reaping it that thou would'st forgo the main harvest of its gifts?" He stood still. The moon issued in splendour from behind a dark cloud, and illuminated the peaceful roof of the forester's cottage. He could see Katharine's chamber window glancing under the silvery rays; in the blindness of love, he stretched out his arms towards it, and mechanically stepped homewards. Then came a second whisper from the voice; for a sudden gust of wind brought the sound of the clock striking the half-hour: "Away to business!" it seemed to say. "Right, right!" he said aloud, "Away to business! It is weak and childish to turn back from a business half accomplished; it is folly to renounce the main advantage, having already, perhaps, risked one's salvation for a trifle. No: let me go through with it."

He stepped forwards with long strides; the wind drove the agitated clouds again over the face of the moon; and William plunged into the thickest gloom of the forest.

At length he stood upon the cross way. At length the magic circle was drawn; the skulls were fixed; and the bones were laid round about. The moon buried herself

deeper and deeper in the clouds ; and no light was shed upon the midnight deed, except from the red lurid gleam of the fire, that waxed and waned by fits, under the gusty squalls of the wind. A remote church clock proclaimed that it was now within a quarter of eleven. William put the ladle upon the fire, and threw in the lead together with three bullets which had already hit the mark once : a practice, amongst those who cast the "fatal bullets," which he remembered to have heard mentioned in his apprenticeship. In the forest was now heard a pattering of rain. At intervals came flitting motions of owls, bats, and other light-shunning creatures, scared by the sudden gleams of the fire : some, dropping from the surrounding boughs, placed themselves on the magic circle, where, by their low, dull croaking, they seemed holding dialogues, in some unknown tongue, with the dead men's skulls. Their numbers increased ; and amongst them were indistinct outlines of misty forms, that went and came, some with brutal, some with human faces. Their vapoury lineaments fluctuated and obeyed the motions of the wind ; one only stood unchanged, and, like a shadow, near to the circle, and settled the sad light of its eyes steadfastly upon William. Sometimes it would raise its pale hands, and seem to sigh : and when it raised its hands the fire would burn more sullenly ; but a gray owl would then fan with his wings, and rekindle the decaying embers. William averted his eyes : for the countenance of his buried mother seemed to look out from the cloudy figure, with piteous expressions of unutterable anguish. Suddenly it struck eleven ; and then the shadow vanished, with the action of one who prays and breathes up sighs to heaven. The owls and the night-ravens flitted croaking about ; and the skulls and bones rattled beneath their wings. William kneeled down on his coaly hearth ; and with the last stroke of eleven out fell the first bullet.

XII

The owls and the bones were now silent ; but along the road came an old crooked beldame pell-mell against the magic circle. She was hung round with wooden spoons, ladles, and other kitchen utensils, and made a hideous

rattling as she moved. The owls saluted her with hooting, and fanned her with their wings. On reaching the circle, she bowed to the bones and skulls ; but the coals shot forth lambent tongues of flame against her, and she drew back her withered hands. Then she paced round the circle, and with a grin presented her wares to William. "Give me the bones," said she, in a harsh guttural tone, "and I'll give thee some spoons. Give the skulls to me, love ; what's the trumpery to thee, love ?" and then she chaunted, with a scornful air—

"There's nothing can help : 'tis an hour too late ;
Nothing can step betwixt thee and thy fate.
Shoot in the light, or shoot in the dark,
Thy bullets, be sure, shall go true to the mark.
'Shoot the dove,' says the word of command ;
And the forester bold, with the matchless hand,
Levels and fires : oh ! marksman good !
The dove lies bathed in her innocent blood !
Here's to the man that shoots the dove !
Come for the prize to me, my love !"

William was aghast with horror ; but he remained quiet within the circle, and pursued his labours. The old woman was one whom he well knew. A crazy old female beggar had formerly roamed about the neighbourhood in this attire, till at last she was lodged in a madhouse. He was at a loss to discover whether the object now before him were the reality or an illusion. After some little pause, the old crone scattered her lumber to the right and left with an angry air, and then tottered slowly away into the gloomy depths of the forest, singing these words :—

"This to the left, and that to the right ;
This and that for the bridal night.
Marksman fine, be sure and steady ;
The bride she is dressed—the priest he is ready.
To-morrow, to-morrow, when daylight departs,
And twilight is spread over broken hearts ;
When the fight is fought, when the race is run,
When the strife and the anguish are over and done ;
When the bride-bed is decked with a winding-sheet,
And the innocent dove has died at thy feet,—
Then comes a bridegroom for me, I trow,
That shall live with me in my house of woe.
Here's to him that shoots the dove !
Come for the prize to me, my love !"

Now came all at once a rattling as of wheels and the cracking of postilions' whips. A carriage and six drove up with outriders. "What the devil's this that stops the way?" cried the man who rode the leaders. "Make way there, I say—clear the road." William looked up and saw sparks of fire darting from the horses' hoofs, and a circle of flame about the carriage wheels. By this he knew it to be a work of the fiend, and never stirred. "Push on, my lads —drive over him helter-skelter," cried the same postilion, looking back to the others; and in a moment the whole equipage moved rapidly upon the circle. William cowered down to the ground, beneath the dash of the leader's fore-legs; but the airy train and the carriage soared into the air, with a whistling sound round and round the circle, and vanished in a hurricane, which moved not a leaf of the trees. Some time elapsed before William recovered from his consternation. However, he compelled his trembling hands to keep firm, and cast a few bullets. At that moment a well-known church clock at a distance began to strike. At first the sound was a sound of comfort, connecting, as with the tones of some friendly voice, the human world with the dismal circle in which he stood, that else seemed cut off from it as by an impassable gulf; but the clock struck twice, thrice—here he shuddered at the rapid flight of time, for his work was not a third part advanced—then it struck a fourth time. He was appalled; every limb seemed palsied; and the mould slipped out of his nerveless hand. With the calmness of despair he listened to the clock until it completed the full hour of twelve; the knell then vibrated on the air, lingered, and died away. To sport with the solemn hour of midnight appeared too bold an undertaking even for the powers of darkness. However, he drew out his watch, looked, and behold! it was no more than half-past eleven.

Recovering his courage, and now fully steeled against all fresh illusions, he resumed his labours with energy. Profound quiet was all around him, disturbed only at intervals by the owls that made a low muttering, and now and then rattled the skulls and bones together. All at once a crashing was heard in the bushes. The sound was familiar to the experienced hunter's ears; he looked round, and, as he

expected, a wild boar sprang out and rushed up to the circle. "This," thought William, "is no deception"; and he leaped up, seized his gun, and snapped it hastily at the wild beast; but no spark issued from the flint: he drew his hanger, but the bristly monster, like the carriage and horse, soared far above him into the air, and vanished.

XIII

William, thus repeatedly baffled, now hastened to fetch up the lost time. Sixty bullets were already cast: he looked up; suddenly the clouds opened, and the moon again threw a brilliant light over the whole country. Just then a voice was heard from the depths of the forest crying out, in great agitation,—"William! William!" It was the voice of Kate. William saw her issue from the bushes, and fearfully look round her. Behind her panted the old woman, stretching her withered spidery arms after the flying girl, and endeavouring to catch hold of her floating garments. Katharine now collected the last remains of her exhausted strength for flight: at that moment the old wooden-leg stepped across her path; for an instant it checked her speed, and then the old hag caught her with her bony hands. William could contain himself no longer: he threw the mould with the last bullet out of his hands, and would have leaped out of the circle: but just then the clock struck twelve; the fiendish vision had vanished; the owls threw the skulls and bones confusedly together, and flew away; the fire went out, and William sank exhausted to the ground.

Now came up slowly a horseman upon a black horse. He stopped at the effaced outline of the magic circle, and spoke thus: "Thou hast stood the trial well; what would'st thou have of me?"

"Nothing of thee, nothing at all," said William: "what I want—I have prepared for myself."

"Ay; but with my help: therefore part belongs to me."

"By no means, by no means: I bargained for no help: I summoned thee not."

The horseman laughed scornfully. "Thou art bolder,"

said he, "than such as thou are wont to be. Take the balls which thou hast cast; sixty for thee, three for me; the sixty go true, the three go askew: all will be plain, when we meet again."

William averted his face: "I will never meet thee again," said he—"leave me."

"Why turnest thou away?" said the stranger with a dreadful laugh: "dost know me?"

"No, no"—said William, shuddering: "I know thee not! I wish not to know thee. Be thou who thou mayest, leave me!"

The black horseman turned away his horse, and said, with a gloomy solemnity—"Thou *dost* know me: the very hair of thy head, which stands on end, confesses for thee that thou dost. I am he—whom at this moment thou namest in thy heart with horror. So saying, he vanished, followed by the dreary sound of withered leaves, and by the echo of blasted boughs falling from the trees beneath which he had stood.

XIV

"Merciful God! what has happened to you, William?" exclaimed Kate and her mother, as William returned, pale and agitated, after midnight: "you look as if fresh risen from the grave."

"Nothing, nothing," said William, "nothing but night air; the truth is, I am a little feverish."

"William, William!" said old Bertram, stepping up to him, "you can't deceive me: something has met you in the forest. Why would you not stop at home? Something has crossed you on the road, I'll swear."

William was struck with the old man's seriousness, and replied—"Well, yes; I acknowledge something *has* crossed me. But wait for nine days: before then, you know yourself that——"

"Gladly, gladly, my son," said Bertram: "and God be praised, that it is anything of that kind which *can* wait for nine days. Trouble him not, wife; Kate, leave him at peace!—Beshrew me, but I had nearly done thee wrong, William, in my thoughts. Now, my good lad, go to bed,

and rest thyself. 'Night,' says the proverb, 'is no man's friend.' But be of good cheer: the man that is in his vocation, and walks only in lawful paths, may bid defiance to the fiends of darkness and all their works."

William needed his utmost powers of dissimulation to disguise from the old man's penetration how little his suspicions had done him injustice. This indulgent affection of father Bertram, and such unshaken confidence in his uprightness, wrung his heart. He hurried to his bedroom, with full determination to destroy the accursed bullets. "One only will I keep, only one I will use," said he, holding out his supplicating hands pressed palm to palm, with bitter tears, towards heaven. "Oh let the purpose, let the purpose, plead for the offence; plead for me the anguish of my heart, and the trial which I could not bear! I will humble, I will abase, myself in the sight of God: with a thousand, with ten thousand, penitential acts I will wash out the guilt of my transgression. But can I, can I now go back, without making shipwreck of all things—of my happiness, my honour, my darling Kate?"

Somewhat tranquillised by this view of his own conduct, he beheld the morning dawn with more calmness than he had anticipated.

XV

The ducal commissioner arrived, and expressed a wish, previously to the decisive trial, of making a little hunting excursion in company with the young forester. "For," said he, "it is all right to keep up old usages; but, between ourselves, the hunter's skill is best shown in the forest. So, jump up, Mr. Forester elect; and let's away to the forest!"

William turned pale, and would have made excuses; but, as these availed nothing with the commissioner, he begged, at least, that he might be allowed to stand his trial first. Old Bertram shook his head thoughtfully:—"William, William!" said he, with a deep tremulous tone. William withdrew instantly; and in a few moments he was equipped for the chase, and, with Bertram, followed the commissioner into the forest.

The old forester sought to suppress his misgivings but

struggled in vain to assume a cheerful aspect. Katharine, too, was dejected and agitated, and went about her household labours as if dreaming. "Was it not possible," she had asked her father, "to put off the trial?" "I also thought of that," replied he, and he kissed her in silence. Recovering himself immediately, he congratulated his daughter on the day—and reminded her of her bridal garland.

The garland had been locked up by old Anne in a drawer; and, hastily attempting to open it, she injured the lock. A child was therefore despatched to a shop to fetch another garland for the bride. "Bring the handsomest they have," cried dame Anne after the child: but the child, in its simplicity, pitched upon that which glittered most: and this happened to be a bride's funeral garland of myrtle and the rosemary entwined with silver, which the mistress of the shop, not knowing the circumstances, allowed the child to carry off. The bride and the mother well understood the ominous import of this accident: each shuddered, and, flinging her arms about the other's neck, sought to stifle her horror in a laugh at the child's blunder. The lock was now tried once more; it opened readily; the coronals were exchanged; and the beautiful tresses of Katharine were enwreathed with the blooming garland of a bride.

XVI

The hunting party returned. The commissioner was inexhaustible in William's praise. "After such proofs of skill," said he, "it seems next to ridiculous that I should call for any other test: but, to satisfy old ordinances, we are sometimes obliged to do more than is absolutely needful: and so we will despatch the matter as briefly as possible. Yonder is a dove sitting on that pillar: level, and bring her down."

"Oh! not *that*—not *that*, for God's sake, William," cried Katharine, hastening to the spot, "shoot not, for God's sake, at the dove. Ah! William, last night I dreamed that I was a white dove; and my mother put a ring about my neck; then came you, and in a moment my mother was covered with blood."

William drew back his piece which he had already levelled; but the commissioner laughed. "Eh, what?" said he, "so timorous? That will never do in a forester's wife: courage, young bride, courage! Or stay, may be the dove is a pet dove of your own?"

"No, it's not that," said Katharine, "but the dream has sadly sunk my spirits." "Well, then," said the commissioner, "if that's all, pluck 'em up again! and so fire away, Mr. Forester."

He fired: and at the same instant, with a piercing shriek, fell Katharine to the ground.

"Strange girl!" said the commissioner, fancying that she had fallen only from panic, and raised her up; but a stream of blood flowed down her face; her forehead was shattered; and a bullet lay sunk in the wound.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed William, as the cry resounded behind him. He turned and saw Kate with a deathly paleness lying stretched in her blood. By her side stood the old wooden-leg, laughing in fiendish mockery, and snarling out—"Sixty go true, three go askew." In the madness of wrath, William drew his hanger, and made a thrust at the hideous creature. "Accursed devil!" cried he, in tones of despair; "is it thus thou hast deluded me?" More he had no power to utter; for he sank insensible to the ground close by his bleeding bride.

The commissioner and the priest sought vainly to speak comfort to the desolate parents. Scarce had the aged mother laid the ominous funeral garland upon the bosom of her daughter's corpse when she wept away the last tears of her unfathomable grief. The solitary father soon followed her. William, the Fatal Marksman, wore away his days in a madhouse.

MR. SCHNACKENBERGER;

OR, TWO MASTERS FOR ONE DOG

FROM THE GERMAN [1]

CHAPTER I

In what manner Mr. Schnackenberger made his Entry into B——

THE sun had just set, and all the invalids at the baths of B—— had retired to their lodgings, when the harsh tones of welcome from the steeple announced the arrival of a new guest. Forthwith all the windows were garrisoned with young faces and old faces, pretty faces and ugly faces; and scarce one but was overspread with instantaneous merriment —a *feu-de-joie* of laughter, that travelled up the street in company with the very extraordinary object that now advanced from the city gates. Upon a little, meagre, scare-crow of a horse, sate a tall, broad-shouldered, young fellow, in a greatcoat of bright peagreen, whose variegated lights and shades, from soaking rains and partial dryings, bore sullen testimony to the changeable state of the weather for the last week. Out of this greatcoat shot up, to a monstrous height, a head surmounted by a huge cocked hat, one end of which hung over the stem, the other over the stern of the horse: the legs belonging to this head were sheathed in a

[1] Appeared in the *London Magazine* for May and June 1823; *not* reprinted by De Quincey in his Collective Edition of his writings; but included here, as certainly his, on the authority of Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, the proprietors of the magazine, when consulted by Mr. Bohn for his list of De Quincey's magazine articles published in his edition of Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual*.—M.

pair of monstrous boots, technically called "field-pieces," which, descending rather too low, were well plaistered with flesh-coloured mud. More, perhaps, in compliance with the established rule, than for any visible use, a switch was in the rider's hand; for to attribute to such a horse, under such a load, any power to have quitted a pace that must have satisfied the most rigorous police in Poland, was obviously too romantic. Depending from his side, and almost touching the ground, rattled an enormous back-sword, which suggested to the thinking mind a salutary hint to allow free passage, without let or unseasonable jesting, to Mr. Jeremiah Schnackenberger, student at the University of X——. He that might be disposed to overlook this hint would certainly pay attention to a second, which crept close behind the other in the shape of a monstrous dog, somewhat bigger than the horse, and presenting on every side a double tier of most respectable teeth. Observing the general muster of the natives, which his appearance had called to the windows, the rider had unslung and mounted a pipe, under whose moving canopy of clouds and vapours he might advance in greater tranquillity: and during this operation his very thoughtful and serious horse had struck up a bye-street—and made a dead stop, before his rider was aware, at the sign of the Golden Sow.

Although the gold had long since vanished from the stone beast, and, to say the truth, every part of the house seemed to sympathise admirably with the unclean habits of its patron image, nevertheless Mr. Jeremiah thought proper to comply with the instincts of his horse; and, as nobody in the street, or in the yard, came forward to answer his call, he gave himself no further trouble, but rode on through the open door right forwards into the bar.

Chapter II

How Mr. Jeremiah came to take up his Quarters at the Golden Sow

"The Lord, and his angels, protect us!—As I live, here comes the late governor!" ejaculated the hostess, Mrs. Bridget Sweetbread, suddenly startled out of her afternoon's

nap by the horse's hoofs—and seeing right before her what she took for the apparition of Don Juan ; whom, as it afterwards appeared, she had seen in a pantomime the night before.

"Thunder and lightning ! my good woman," said the student laughing, "would you dispute the reality of my flesh and blood ?"

Mrs. Bridget, however, on perceiving her mistake, cared neither for the sword nor for the dog, but exclaimed, "Why, then, let me tell you, sir, it's not the custom in this country to ride into parlours, and disturb honest folks when they're taking their rest. Innkeeping's not the trade it has been to me, God he knows : but, for all that, I'll not put up with such work from nobody."

"Good, my dear creature ; what you say is good—very good : but let me tell you, it's *not* good that I must be kept waiting in the street, and no soul in attendance to take my horse and feed him."

"Oh that base villain of a hostler !" said the landlady, immediately begging pardon, and taking hold of the bridle, whilst Mr. Schnackenberger dismounted.

"That's a good creature," said he ; "I love you for this : and I don't care if I take up my quarters here, which at first was not my intention. Have you room for me ?"

"Room !" answered Mrs. Sweetbread ; "ah ! now there's just the whole Golden Sow at your service ; the more's the pity."

On Mr. Jeremiah's asking the reason for this superfluity of room, she poured out a torrent of abuse against the landlord of the Double-barrelled Gun, who—not content with having at all times done justice to his sign—had latterly succeeded, with the help of vicious coachmen and unprincipled postilions, in drawing away her whole business, and had at length utterly ruined the once famous inn of the Golden Sow. And true it was that the apartment into which she now introduced her guest showed some vestiges of ancient splendour in the pictures of six gigantic sows. The late landlord had been a butcher, and had christened his inn from his practice of slaughtering a pig every week ; and the six swine, as large as life, and each bearing a

separate name, were designed to record his eminent skill in the art of fattening.

His widow, who was still in mourning for him, must certainly have understood Mr. Schnackenberger's words, "*I love you for this*," in a sense very little intended by the student. For she brought up supper herself; and, with her own hand, unarmed with spoon or other implement, dived after and secured a little insect which was floundering about in the soup. So much the greater was her surprise on observing that, after such flattering proofs of attention, her guest left the soup untouched, and made no particular application to the other dishes—so well harmonising with the general character of the Golden Sow. At last, however, she explained his want of appetite into the excess of his passion for herself; and, on that consideration, failed not to lay before him a statement of her flourishing circumstances, and placed in a proper light the benefits of a marriage with a woman somewhat older than himself.

Mr. Schnackenberger, whose good-nature was infinite, occasionally interrupted his own conversation with Juno, the great dog, who meantime was despatching the supper without any of her master's scruples, to throw in a "Yes," or a "No,"—a "Well," or a "So, so." But at length his patience gave way, and he started up, saying, "Well: *Sufficit*: Now —march, old witch!" This harmless expression she took in such ill part that, for mere peace sake, he was obliged to lead her to the door and shut her out: and then, undressing himself, he stept into bed; and, in defiance of the straw which everywhere stuck out, and a quilt of a hundredweight,[1] he sunk into a deep slumber under the agreeable serenade of those clamorous outcries which Mrs. Sweetbread still kept up on the outside of the door.

[1] The custom in North Germany is to sleep *under* a bed as well as *upon* one; consequently, when this happens to be a cheap one, it cannot be stuffed with feathers, down, &c., but with some heavier material.

Chapter III

In which our Hero polishes a Rough-Rider

"Fire and furies!" exclaimed Mr. Schnackenberger, as Juno broke out into uproarious barking about midnight: the door was opened from the outside; and in stepped the landlady, arrayed in a night-dress that improved her charms into a rivalry with those of her sign at the street-door; accompanied by a fellow who, by way of salutation, cracked an immense hunting-whip.

"So it's here that I'm to get my own again?" cried the fellow: and forthwith Mr. Jeremiah stepped out of bed, and hauled him up to the light of the lamp which the landlady carried.

"Yes, sir," said the rough-rider, "it's I, sure enough"; and, to judge by the countenance of his female conductor, every accent of his anger was music of the spheres to her unquenchable wrath: "I'm the man, sure enough, whose horse you rode away with; and *that* you'll find to be a true bill."

"Rode away with!" cried Mr. Jeremiah: "Now, may the sweetest of all thunderbolts——but, rascal, this instant what's to pay? then take thy carrion out of the stable, and be off." So saying, Mr. Schnackenberger strode to the bed for his well-filled purse."

On these signs of solvency, however, the horse-dealer turned up the gentler phasis of his character, and said, "Nay, nay; since things are so, why it's all right; and, in the Lord's name, keep the horse as long as you want him."

"Dog! in the first place, and firstly, tell me what's your demand; in the second place, and secondly, go to the d——l."

But, whilst the rough-rider continued with low bows to decline the first offer, being satisfied, as it seemed, with the second, the choleric Mr. Schnackenberger cried out "Seize him, Juno!" And straightway Juno leaped upon him, and executed the arrest so punctually that the trembling equestrian, without further regard to ceremony, made out his charge.

Forthwith Mr. Jeremiah paid down the demand upon the

table, throwing in something extra, with the words, "*That* for the fright." The dealer in horse-flesh returned him a thousand thanks; hoped for his honour's further patronage; and then, upon being civilly assured by Mr. Jeremiah that, if he did not in one instant *walk* down the stairs, he would, to his certain knowledge, have to *fly* down them, the rough-rider, in company with the landlady, took a rapid and polite leave of Mr. Schnackenberger; who was too much irritated by the affront to compose himself again to sleep.

Chapter IV

How Mr. Schnackenberger and Juno conduct themselves when the House becomes too hot to hold them

Day was beginning to dawn when a smoke, which forced its way through the door, and which grew every instant thicker and more impressive, a second time summoned Mr. Schnackenberger from his bed. As he threw open the door, such a volume of flames rolled in from the staircase, which was already on fire from top to bottom, that he saw there was no time to be lost: so he took his pipe, loaded it as quickly as possible, lighted it from the flames of the staircase, began smoking, and then, drawing on his pea-green coat and buckling on his sword, he put his head out of the window to see if there were any means of escape. To leap right down upon the pavement seemed too hazardous; and the most judicious course, it struck him, would be to let himself down upon the Golden Sow, which was at no great depth below his window, and from this station to give the alarm. Even this, however, could not be reached without a leap: Mr. Schnackenberger attempted it; and, by means of his great talents for equilibristic exercises, he hit the mark so well that he planted himself in the very saddle, as it were, upon the back of this respectable brute. Unluckily, however, there was no house opposite; and Mrs. Sweetbread with her people slept at the back. Hence it was that for a very considerable space of time he was obliged to continue riding the sign of the Golden Sow; whilst Juno, for whom he could not possibly make room behind him, looked out of

the window, and accompanied her master's text of occasional clamours for assistance with a very appropriate commentary of howls.

Some Poles at length passed by: but, not understanding one word of German, and seeing a man thus betimes in the morning mounted on the Golden Sow, smoking very leisurely, and occasionally hallooing as if for his private amusement, they naturally took Mr. Schnackenberger for a maniac: until, at length, the universal language of fire, which now began to burst out of the window, threw some light upon the darkness of their Polish understandings. Immediately they ran for assistance, which about the same moment the alarm-bells began to summon.

However, the fire-engines arrived on the ground before the ladders: these last were the particular objects of Mr. Jeremiah's wishes: meantime, in default of those, and as the second best thing that could happen, the engines played with such a well-directed stream of water upon the window, upon the Golden Sow, and upon Mr. Jeremiah Schnackenberger, that for one while they were severally rendered tolerably fire-proof. When at length the ladders arrived, and the people were on the point of applying them to the Golden Sow, he earnestly begged that they would, first of all, attend to a case of more urgent necessity: for himself, he was well mounted—as they saw; could assure them that he was by no means in a combustible state; and, if they would be so good as to be a little more parsimonious with their water, he didn't care if he continued to pursue his morning's ride a little longer. On the other hand, Juno at the window to the right was reduced every moment to greater extremities, as was pretty plainly indicated by the increasing violence of her howling.

But the people took it ill that they should be desired to rescue a four-legged animal, and peremptorily refused.

"My good lads," said the man upon the sow, "for heaven's sake don't delay any longer: one heaven, as Pfeffel observes, is over all good creatures that are pilgrims on this earth—let their travelling coat (which by the way is none of their own choosing) be what it may;—smooth like yours and mine, or shaggy like Juno's."

But all to no purpose: not Pfeffel himself *in propria persona* could have converted them from the belief that to take any trouble about such a brute was derogatory to the honour of the very respectable citizens of B——.

However, when Mr. Jeremiah drew his purse-strings, and offered a golden ducat to him that would render this service to his dog, instantly so many were the competitors for the honour of delivering the excellent pilgrim in the shaggy coat that none of them would resign a ladder to any of the rest: and thus, in this too violent zeal for her safety, possibly Juno would have perished—but for a huge Brunswick sausage, which, happening to go past in the mouth of a spaniel, violently irritated the appetite of Juno, and gave her courage for the *salto mortale* down to the pavement.

"God bless my soul," said Mr. Schnackenberger, to the men who stood mourning over the golden soap-bubble that had just burst before their eyes, "what's to be done now?" and, without delay, he offered the ducat to him that would instantly give chase to Juno, who had already given chase to the sausage round the street corner, and would restore her to him upon the spot. And such was the agitation of Mr. Schnackenberger's mind that for a few moments he seemed as if rising in his stirrups, and on the point of clapping spurs to the Golden Sow for the purpose of joining in the chase.

Chapter V

From which may be descried the object of Mr. Schnackenberger's Journey to B——, and a Prospect of an Introduction to High Life

Mr. Schnackenberger's consternation was, in fact, not without very rational grounds. The case was this:—Juno was an English bitch—infamous for her voracious appetite in all the villages, far and wide, about the university—and, indeed, in all respects, without a peer throughout the whole country. Of course, Mr. Schnackenberger was much envied on her account by a multitude of fellow-students; and very large offers were made him for the dog. To all such overtures, however, the young man had turned a deaf ear for a long time, and even under the heaviest pecuniary distresses;

though he could not but acknowledge to himself that Juno brought him nothing but trouble and vexation. For not only did this brute (generally called The Monster) make a practice of visiting other people's kitchens, and appropriating all unguarded dainties—but she went even to the length of disputing the title to their own property with he-cooks and she-cooks, butchers and butchers' wives, &c.; and whosoever had once made acquaintance with the fore-paws of this ravenous lady allowed her thenceforwards, without resistance, to carry off all sausages or hams which she might choose to sequestrate, and directly presented a bill to her master; in which bill it commonly happened that indemnification for the fright, if not expressly charged as one of the items, had a blank space, however, left for its consideration beneath the sum-total. At length, matters came to that pass that the reimbursement of Juno's annual outrages amounted to a far larger sum than Mr. Schnackenberger's own not very frugal expenditure. On a day, therefore, when Juno had made an entire clearance of the larder appropriated to a whole establishment of day-labourers, and Mr. Schnackenberger had, in consequence, been brought into great trouble in the university courts, in his first moments of irritation he asked his friend Mr. Fabian Sebastian, who had previously made him a large offer for the dog, whether he were still disposed to take her on those terms. "Undoubtedly," said Mr. Sebastian—promising, at the same time, to lay down the purchase money on that day se'nnight, upon delivery of the article.

Delivery of the article would, no question, have been made upon the spot, had not the vendor repented of his bargain the next moment after it was concluded: on that account he still kept the dog in his own possession, and endeavoured, during the week's respite, to dispose his friend's mind to the cancelling of the contract. He, however, insisted on the punctual fulfilment of the treaty—letter and spirit. Never had Mr. Schnackenberger been so much disturbed in his mind as at this period. Simply with the view of chasing away the nervous horrors which possessed his spirits, he had mounted his scarecrow and ridden abroad into the country. A remittance which he had lately received from

home was still in his purse ; and said he to himself, Suppose I were just to ride off to the baths at B—— about fifteen miles distant ! Nobody would know me there ; and I might at any rate keep Juno a fortnight longer ! And exactly in this way it had happened that Mr. Schnackenberger had come to B——.

At this instant, he was indebted to a lucky accident for a momentary diversion of his thoughts from the danger which threatened him in regard to Juno. Amongst other visitors to the baths who were passing by at this early hour happened to be the Princess of * *. Her carriage drew up at the very moment when Mr. Jeremiah, having dismounted from the sow, was descending the ladder : with her usual gracious manner, she congratulated the student upon his happy deliverance ; and, finding that he was a countryman of her own, she invited him to a ball which she gave on the evening of that day, in honour of the King's birthday.

Now, it must be acknowledged that a ball-room was not exactly the stage on which Mr. Schnackenberger's habits of life had qualified him for shining : however, the pleasure of a nearer acquaintance with the interesting princess held out too flattering a prospect to allow of his declining her invitation. Just at this moment Juno returned.

Meantime the fire (occasioned probably by a spark falling from the landlady's lamp amongst the straw under the staircase) had been extinguished : and Mrs. Sweetbread, who had at length been roused at the back, now made her appearance ; and, with many expressions of regret for what had happened to Mr. Schnackenberger, who had entirely re-established himself in her esteem by his gold-laden purse, and also by what she called his "very handsome behaviour" to the horse-dealer, she requested that he would be pleased to step into one of her back rooms ; at the same time, offering to reinstate his clothes in wearable condition by drying them as rapidly as possible : a necessity which was too clamorously urgent for immediate attention to allow of the dripping student's rejecting her offer.

Chapter VI

In what manner Mr. Jeremiah prepared himself for the Ball

As Mr. Jeremiah stood looking out of the window for the purpose of whiling away a tedious forenoon, it first struck his mind—upon the sight of a number of men dressed very differently from himself—that his wardrobe would scarcely match with the festal splendour of the *fête* at which he was to be present in the evening. Even if it had been possible to overlook the tarnished lustre of his coat, not much embellished by its late watery trials upon the Golden Sow, yet he could not possibly make his appearance in a surtout. He sent therefore to one tailor after another: but all assured him that they had their hands much too full of business to undertake the conversion of his surtout into a dress coat against the evening; still less could they undertake to make a new one. Just as vainly did he look about for shoes: many were on sale; but none of them with premises spacious enough to accommodate his very respectable feet.

All this put him into no little perplexity. True it was that Mrs. Sweetbread had spontaneously thrown open to his inspection the wardrobe of her deceased husband. But even *he* had contrived to go through this world in shoes of considerably smaller dimensions than Mr. Jeremiah demanded. And from a pretty large choice of coats there was not one which he could turn to account. For, to say nothing of their being one and all too short by a good half ell, even in the very best of them he looked precisely as that man looks who has lately slaughtered a hog, or as that man looks who designs to slaughter a hog.

Now, then, when all his plans for meeting the exigencies of his case had turned out abortive, suddenly a bold idea struck him. In a sort of inspiration he seized a pair of scissors, for the purpose of converting with his own untutored hand of genius his pea-green surtout into a pea-green frock. This operation having, in his own judgment, succeeded to a marvel, he no longer hesitated to cut out a pair of ball shoes from his neat's-leather "field-pieces." Whatever equipments were still wanting could be had for money, with the excep-

tion of a shirt; and, as to *that*, the wedding shirt of the late Mr. Sweetbread would answer the purpose very passably.

What provoked our hero most of all were the new patent shoe-buckles, the fine points of which would not take firm hold of the coarse leather shoes, but on every bold step burst asunder—so that he was obliged to keep his eye warily upon them, and, in consideration of their tender condition, to set his feet down to the ground very gently.

The hostess had just sunk pretty deep into her customary failing of intoxication, when he went to her and asked how he looked in his gala dress. "Look!" said she; "why, like a king baked in gingerbread. Ah! now, such a man as you is the man for my money:—stout, and resolute, and active, and a man that——"

"Basta! sufficit, my dear."

"To be sure, for his professional merit, I mustn't say any thing against the late Mr. Sweetbread: no, nobody must say anything against *that*: he was the man for slaughtering of swine: oh! he slaughtered them that it was beautiful to see! pigs in particular, and pigs in general, were what he understood. Ah! lord! to my dying day I shall never forget the great sow that he presented to our gracious princess when she was at the baths, two years come Michaelmas. Says her Highness to him, says she,—'Master,' says she, 'one may see by your look that you understand how to fatten: anybody,' says she, 'may see it in his face: a child may see it by the very look on him.' 'Ah!' says her Highness, 'he's the man for swine: he was born to converse with hogs: he's a heaven-born curer of bacon.'—Lord! Mr. Schnackenberger, you'll not believe how these gracious words revived my very heart! The tears came into my eyes, and I couldn't speak for joy. But, when all's said and done, what's fame? what's glory? say I. A man like you is the man for me; but for such another lazy old nightcap as the late Mr. Sweetbread——"

"Bah! sufficit, sweatheart"; at the same time squeezing her hand; which she took as an intimation that she ought not to trouble herself with the past, but rather look forward to a joyous futurity.

As the hour drew near for presenting himself in the circle

of the princess, Mr. Jeremiah recommended to her the most vigilant care of Juno, from whom he very unwillingly separated himself in these last days of their connexion—and not until he had satisfied himself that it was absolutely impossible to take her with him to the ball. Another favourite, namely, his pipe, ought also, he feared, in strict propriety to be left behind. But, in the first place, "who knows," thought he, "but there may be one room reserved for such ladies and gentlemen as choose to smoke?" And, secondly, let *that* be as it might, he considered that the great *meerschaum*[1] head of his pipe—over which he watched as over the apple of his eye—could nowhere be so safely preserved as in his own pocket: as to any protuberance that it might occasion, *that* he valued not at a rush. Just as little did he care for the grotesque appearance of the mouth-piece, which in true journeyman's fashion stuck out from the opening of his capacious pocket to a considerable distance.

"And now don't you go and forget some people in the midst of all this show of powdered puppies," cried the landlady after him.

"Ah! my darling!" said he, laughing, "just mind Juno: have an eye to Juno, my darling"; and for Juno's sake he suppressed the "*old witch*" that his lips were itching a second time to be delivered of.

Chapter VII

Mr. Schnackenberger is enamoured, and of whom; and what Prospects open upon him in his Pursuit of "La Belle Passion"

At the hotel of the princess all the resources of good taste and hospitality were called forth to give *éclat* to the *fête*, and do honour to the day; and by ten o'clock a very numerous and brilliant company had already assembled.

So much the more astounding must have been the entry

[1] "*Meerschaum*": I believe a particular kind of clay, called "sea-spray," from its fineness and lightness, from which the boles of pipes are made in Turkey—often at enormous prices, and much imported into Germany, where they are in great request. Such is the extent of *my* knowledge on the subject; or perhaps of my ignorance. But, in fact, I know nothing about it.

of Mr. Jeremiah Schnackenberger; who, by the way, was already familiar to the eyes of many, from his very public entrance into the city on the preceding evening, and to others from his morning's exhibition on the Golden Sow. His eyes and his thoughts being occupied by the single image of the fascinating hostess, of course it no more occurred to him to remark that his self-constructed coat was detaching itself at every step from its linings, whilst the pockets of the *ci-devant* surtout still displayed their original enormity of outline, than in general it would ever have occurred to him that the *tout ensemble* of his costume was likely to make, and *had*, in fact, made, a very great sensation.

This very general attention to Mr. Schnackenberger, and the total unconsciousness of this honour on the part of Mr. Schnackenberger himself, did not escape the notice of the princess; and, at the first opportunity, she despatched a gentleman to draw his attention to the indecorum of his dress, and to put him in the way of making the proper alterations. Laughter and vexation struggled in Mr. Schnackenberger's mind, when he became aware of the condition of his equipments: and he very gladly accompanied the ambassador of his hostess into a private room, where clothes and shoes were furnished him, in which he looked like any other reasonable man. On his return to the ball-room, he lost no time in making his acknowledgments to the princess, and explaining the cause of his unbecoming attire. The princess, with a natural goodness of heart and true hospitality, was anxious to do what she could to restore her strange guest to satisfaction with himself, and to establish him in some credit with the company: she had besides discovered with pleasure that, amidst all his absurdities, Mr. Schnackenberger was really a man of some ability: on these several considerations, therefore, she exerted herself to maintain a pretty long conversation with him; which honour Mr. Jeremiah so far misinterpreted as to ascribe it to an interest of a very tender character. To Mr. Schnackenberger, who had taken up the very extraordinary conceit that his large person had some attractions about it, there could naturally be nothing very surprising in all this: and he felt himself

called upon not to be wanting to himself, but to push his good fortune. Accordingly, he kept constantly about the person of the princess: let her move in what direction she would, there was Mr. Jeremiah Schnackenberger at hand ready to bewitch her with his conversation; and, having discovered that she was an amateur of botany, and proposed visiting a botanical garden on the following day, he besieged her with offers of his services in the capacity of guide.

"Possibly, when the time comes," said the princess, aloud, "I shall avail myself of your goodness"; and the visible displeasure with which she withdrew herself from his worrying importunities so obviously disposed all the bystanders to smile that Mr. Schnackenberger himself became alive to his own *bêtise*, and a blush of shame and vexation suffused his countenance. What served at the moment greatly to exasperate these feelings was the behaviour of a certain Mr. Von Pilsen—who had from the first paid uncommon attention to the very extraordinary phenomenon presented by Mr. Schnackenberger's person—had watched the whole course of the persecutions with which he had distressed the princess — and at this moment seemed quite unable to set any bounds to his laughter. In extreme dudgeon, Mr. Schnackenberger hastened into one of the most remote apartments, and flung himself back upon a sofa. Covering his eyes with his hands, he saw none of the numbers who passed by him. But the first time that he looked up, behold! a paper was lying upon his breast. He examined it attentively; and found the following words written in pencil, to all appearance by a female hand: "We are too narrowly watched in this place. To-morrow morning about nine o'clock! The beautiful botanic gardens will secure us a fortunate rendezvous."

"Ay," said Mr. Jeremiah, "sure enough it's from her!" He read the note again and again: and, the more unhappy he had just now been, so much the more was he now intoxicated with his dawning felicities.

Chapter VIII

In which Juno plays a principal Part

The rattling of a chain through crashing glass and porcelain, which spread alarm through the ball-room, would hardly have drawn Mr. Schnackenberger's attention in his present condition of rapturous elevation, had not the well-known voice of Juno reached his ears at the same moment. He hurried after the sound—shocked, and to be shocked. The fact was simply this:—Juno had very early in the evening withdrawn herself from the *surveillance* of the Golden Sow, and had followed her master's steps. Often ejected from the mansion of the princess, she had as often returned; so that at last it was thought best to chain her up in the garden. Unfortunately, a kitten belonging to a young female attendant of the princess had suddenly run past; Juno made a rush after it; the chain broke away from the woodwork of the kennel; the panic-struck kitten retreated into the house—taking the first road which presented: close upon the rear of the kitten pressed Juno and her chain; close upon the rear of Juno pressed the young woman in anguish for her kitten's life, and armed with a fly-flapper; and, the road happening to lead into the ball-room, the whole train—pursuers and pursued—helter skelter fell into the quarters of the waltzers. The kitten attempted to take up a position behind a plateau on one of the sideboards: but from this she was immediately dislodged by Juno; and, the retreat commencing afresh right across the sideboards which were loaded with refreshments, all went to wreck—glasses and china, all was afloat—sherbet and lemonade, raspberry-vinegar and orgeat: and, at the very moment when Mr. Jeremiah returned, the belligerent powers, dripping with celestial nectar—having just charged up a column of dancers—were wheeling through the door by which he had entered: and the first check to the wrath of Juno was the seasonable arrest of her master's voice.

That the displeasure of the dancers, who had been discomposed and besprinkled by Juno, fell entirely upon her master was pretty evident from their faces. Of all the parties concerned, however, none was more irritated than

the young woman ; she was standing upon the stairs, caressing and fondling her kitten, as Mr. Schnackenberger went down, leading Juno in his pocket handkerchief ; and she let drop some such very audible hints upon the ill-breeding and boorishness of certain pretended gentlemen that Mr. Schnackenberger would, without doubt, have given her a very severe reprimand—if he had not thought it more dignified to affect to overlook her.

Chapter IX

Which treats of Experiments not very common at Birthday Fêtes

"Now, my dears," said Mr. Von Pilsen to a party who were helping him to laugh at the departed Mr. Schnackenberger, "as soon as the fellow returns, we must get him into our party at supper."

"Returns?" exclaimed another ; "why, I should fancy he had had enough of birthday *fêtes* for one life."

"You think so?" said Von Pilsen : "so do not I. No, no, my good creature ; I flatter myself that I go upon pretty sure grounds : I saw those eyes which he turned upon the princess on making his exit ; and mind what I say : he takes his beast home, and——comes back again. Therefore, be sure and get him amongst us at supper, and set the barrel abroach. I wouldn't for all the world the monster should go away untapped."

The words were scarce uttered, when, sure enough, the body, or "barrel," of Mr. Schnackenberger did roll into the room for a second time. Forthwith Von Pilsen and his party made up to him ; and Pilsen, having first with much art laboured to efface any suspicions which might have possessed the student's mind in consequence of his former laughter, proceeded to thank him for the very extraordinary sport which his dog had furnished, and protested that he must be better acquainted with him.

"Why, as to *that*," said Mr. Schnackenberger, "a better acquaintance must naturally be very agreeable to me. But, in respect to the dog, and what you call the sport, I'm quite of another opinion, and would give all I'm worth that it had not happened."

"Oh no," they all declared; "the *fête* would have wanted its most brilliant features if Mr. Schnackenberger or his dog had been absent. No, no; without flattery he must allow them to call him the richest fund of amusement, the brightest attraction, of the evening." But Schnackenberger shook his head incredulously; said he wished he could think so: but with a deep sigh he persisted in his own opinion; in which he was the more confirmed when he perceived that the princess, who was now passing him to the supper-room, turned away her eyes the moment she perceived him.

In this state of mind Mr. Jeremiah naturally, but unconsciously, lent himself to the designs of his new acquaintances. Every glass that the devil of mischief and of merry malice poured out did the devil of Schnackenberger's despair drink off; until at last the latter devil was tolerably well drowned in wine.

About this time enter Juno again — being her second (and positively last) appearance upon these boards. Mr. Jeremiah's new friends paid so much homage to the promising appearance of her jaws that they made room for her very respectfully as she pressed up to her master. He, whose recent excesses in wine had re-established Juno in the plenitude of her favour, saw with approving calmness his female friend lay both her fore-paws on the table and appropriate all that remained on his plate, to the extreme astonishment of all present.

"My friend," said Mr. Jeremiah, to a footman who was on the point of pulling away the unbidden guest, "don't you, for God's sake, get into any trouble. My Juno understands no jesting on these occasions: and it might so happen that she would leave a mark of her remembrance with you that you would not forget so long as you lived."

"But I suppose, sir, you won't expect that a dog can be allowed to sup with her Highness's company?"

"Oh! faith, sir, credit me—the dog is a more respectable member of society than yourself and many a one here present: so just leave me and my Juno unmolested. Else I may, perhaps, take the trouble to make an example of you."

The princess, whose attention was now drawn, made a sign to the servant to retire; and Von Pilsen and his friends

could scarcely keep down their laughter to a well-bred key when Mr. Schnackenberger drew his pipe from his pocket—loaded it—lit it at one of the chandeliers over the supper-table—and in one minute wrapt the whole neighbourhood in a voluminous cloud of smoke.

As some little damper to their merriment, however, Mr. Schnackenberger addressed a few words to them from time to time:—"You laugh, gentlemen," said he; "and, doubtless, there's something or other very amusing,—no doubt, infinitely amusing, if one could but find it out. However, I could make your appetites for laughing vanish—ay, vanish in one moment. For, understand me now, one word—one little word—from me to Juno, and in two minutes the whole room shall be as empty as if it had been swept out with a broom. Just the first that I look at, no matter whom, she catches by the breast—ay, just you, sir, or you, sir, or you Mr. Von Pilsen" (fixing his eye upon him), "if I do but say—Seize him, Juno!" The word had fled: and in the twinkling of an eye Juno's fore-paws, not over clean, were fixed in the elegant white silk waistcoat of Mr. Von Pilsen.

This scene was the signal for universal uproar and alarm. Even Mr. Jeremiah, on remarking the general rising of the company, though totally unaware that his harmless sport had occasioned it, rose also; called the dog off, and comforted Von Pilsen, who was half dead with fright, by assuring him that, had he but said—"Bite him, Juno!"—matters would have ended far worse.

On Mr. Schnackenberger's standing up, his bodily equilibrium was manifestly so much endangered that one of the company, out of mere humanity, offered his servant to see him safe home. A slight consciousness of his own condition induced our hero to accept of this offer: through some misunderstanding, however, the servant led him, not to the Golden Sow, but to the Double-Barrelled Gun.

Mr. Schnackenberger, on being asked for his number, said "No. 5,"—that being the number of his room at the Golden Sow. He was accordingly shown up to No. 5; and, finding a bed under an alcove, he got into it dressed as he was, and in one moment had sunk into a profound slumber.

Chapter X

Which narrates an Engagement on unequal Terms—first for one side, then for the other

Half an hour after came the true claimant; who, being also drunk, went right upstairs without troubling the waiter, and, forthwith getting into bed, laid himself right upon Mr. Jeremiah Schnackenberger.

"D—n this heavy quilt," said the student, waking up and recollecting the hundred-pounder of the preceding night; and, without further ceremony, he kicked the supposed quilt into the middle of the room.

Now began war: for the "quilt" rose up without delay; and Mr. Schnackenberger, who had been somewhat worse handled than his opponent by the devil of drunkenness, would doubtless have come by the worst, had he not in his extremity ejaculated "Juno!" whereupon she, putting aside all selfish considerations, which at the moment had fastened her to a leg of venison in the kitchen, rushed up on the summons of duty, and carried a reinforcement that speedily turned the scale of victory. The alarm which this hubbub created soon brought to the field of battle the whole population of the inn, in a very picturesque variety of night-dresses; and the intruding guest would in all likelihood have been kicked back to the Golden Sow, but that the word of command to the irritated Juno, which obviously trembled on his lips, was deemed worthy of very particular attention and respect.

Chapter XI

In which unfortunate Love meditates Revenge

At half-past ten on the following morning, at which time Mr. Schnackenberger first unclosed his eyes, behold! at the foot of his bed was sitting my hostess of the Golden Sow. "Ay," said she, "I think it's time, sir: and it's time, I think, to let you know what it is to affront a creditable body before all the world."

"Nay, for God's sake, old one, what's the matter?" said

Mr. Schnackenberger, laughing and sitting bolt upright in bed.

"Old? Well, if I have a few more years on my head, I've a little more thought *in* it: but, perhaps, you're not altogether so thoughtless as I've been fancying in your actings towards me, poor unfortunate widow: if that's the case, you are a base wicked man, and you deserve——"

"Why, woman, how now? Has a tarantula bit you; or what is it? Speak."

"Speak! ay, I'll speak; and all the world shall hear me. First of all come you riding into my bar like a crazy man: and I, good easy creature, let myself be wheedled, carry you meat—drink—everything—with my own hands; sit by your side; keep you in talk the whole evening, for fear you should be tired; and what was my reward? 'March,' says you, 'old witch.' Well, that passed on. At midnight I am called out of my bed—for your sake: and the end of that job is that along of you the Sow is half burned down. But for all that I say never an ill word to you. I open the late Mr. Sweetbread's clothes-presses to you: his poor innocent wedding-shirt you don over your great shameless body; go off; leave me behind with a masterful dog, that takes a roast leg of mutton from off the spit; and, when he should have been beat for it, runs off with it into the street. You come back with the beast. Not to offend you, I say never a word of what he has done. Off you go again: well: scarce is your back turned when the filthy carrion begins running my rabbits up and down the yard; eats up all that he can catch; and never a one would have been left to tell the tale, if the great giantical hostler (him as blacked your shoes) hadn't ha' cudgelled him off. And, after all this, there are you hopping away at the ball wi' some painted doll —looking babies in her eyes—quite forgetting me that has to sit up for you at home pining and grieving: and all isn't enough, but at last you must trot off to another inn."

"What then," said Mr. Schnackenberger, "is it fact that I'm not at the Golden Sow?"

"Charming!" said Mrs. Sweetbread; "and so you would make believe you don't know it; but I shall match you, or find them as will: rest you sure of *that*."

"Children!" said Mr. Schnackenberger to the waiter and boots, who were listening in astonishment with the door half-open; "of all loves, rid me of this monster."

"Ay, what!" said she in a voice of wrath; and put herself on the defensive. But a word or two of abuse against the landlord of the Double-Barrelled Gun, which escaped her in her heat, irritated the men to that degree that in a few moments afterwards Mrs. Sweetbread was venting her wrath in the street—to the wonder of all passers-by, who looked after her until she vanished into the house of a well-known attorney.

Meantime, Mr. Schnackenberger, having on inquiry learned from the waiter in what manner he had come to the inn, and the night-scene which had followed, was apologizing to the owner of No. 5,—when to his great alarm the church clock struck eleven. "Nine," he remembered, was the hour fixed by the billet: and, the more offence he might have given to the princess by his absurdities overnight, of which he had some obscure recollection, so much the more necessary was it that he should keep the appointment. The botanic garden was two miles off: so, shutting up Juno, he ordered a horse; and, in default of boots, which, alas! existed no longer in that shape, he mounted in silk stockings and pumps, and rode off at a hand gallop.

Chapter XII

Mr. Schnackenberger's Engagement with an Old Butterwoman

The student was a good way advanced on his road when he descried the princess, attended by another lady and a gentleman, approaching in an open carriage. As soon, however, as he was near enough to be recognized by the party in the carriage, the princess turned away her head with manifest signs of displeasure—purely, as it appeared, to avoid noticing Mr. Jeremiah. Scarcely, however, was the carriage past him, together with Mr. Von Pilsen, who galloped by him in a tumult of laughter, when the ill-fate of our hero so ordered it that all eyes which would not notice him for his honour should be reverted upon his disgrace. The white

turnpike gate so frightened our rider's horse that he positively refused to pass it: neither whip nor spur would bring him to reason. Meantime, up comes an old butterwoman.[1] At the very moment when she was passing, the horse in his panic steps back and deposits one of his hind legs in the basket of the butterwoman: down comes the basket, with all its eggs, rotten and sound; and down comes the old woman, squash, into the midst of them. "Murder! murder!" shouted the butterwoman; and forthwith every individual thing that could command a pair or two pair of legs ran out of the turnpike-house; the carriage of the princess drew up, to give the ladies a distant view of Mr. Schnackenberger engaged with the butterwoman; and Mr. Von Pilsen wheeled his horse round into a favourable station for seeing anything the ladies might overlook. Rage gave the old butterwoman strength; she jumped up nimbly, and seized Mr. Schnackenberger so stoutly by the laps of his coat that he vainly endeavoured to extricate himself from her grasp. At this crisis, up came Juno, and took her usual side in such disputes. But, to do this with effect, Juno found it necessary first of all to tear off the coat lap; for, the old woman keeping such hold of it, how else could Juno lay her down on her back—set her paws upon her breast—and then look up to her master, as if asking for a certificate of having acquitted herself to his satisfaction?

To rid himself of spectators, Mr. Jeremiah willingly paid the old woman the full amount of her demand, and then returned to the city. It disturbed him greatly, however, that the princess should thus again have seen him under such circumstances of disgrace. Anxious desire to lay open his heart before her—and to place himself in a more advantageous light, if not as to his body, yet at all events as to his intellect—determined him to use his utmost interest with her to obtain a private audience; "at which," thought he, "I can easily beg her pardon for having overslept the appointed hour."

[1] In the original "eine marketenderin," a female sutler: but I have altered it, to save an explanation of what the old sutler was after.

Chapter XIII

In which Good Luck and Bad Luck are distributed in equal proportions

The good luck seemed to have anticipated Mr. Schnackenberger's nearest wishes. For, on reaching the Double-Barrelled Gun, whither he arrived without further disturbance than that of the general gazing to which he was exposed by the fragment of a coat which survived from the late engagement, a billet was put into his hands of the following tenor: "Come and explain this evening, if you can explain, your astonishing neglect of this morning's appointment. I shall be at the theatre, and shall do what I can to dismiss my attendants."

But bad luck came also—in the person of a lawyer. The lawyer stated that he called on the part of the landlady of the Golden Sow, to put the question for the last time in civil terms, "whether Mr. Schnackenberger were prepared to fulfil those just expectations which he had raised in her heart, or whether she must be compelled to pursue her claims by due course of law."

Mr. Schnackenberger was beginning to launch out with great fury upon the shameless and barefaced impudence of such expectations: but the attorney interrupted him; and observed with provoking coolness "that there was no occasion for any warmth—no occasion in the world; that certainly Mrs. Sweetbread could not have framed these expectations wholly out of the air: something (and he grinned sarcastically), something, it must be supposed, had passed: now, for instance, this wedding-shirt of the late Mr. Sweetbread—she would hardly, I think, have resigned this to your use, Mr. Schnackenberger, unless some engagements had preceded either in the shape of words or of actions. However," said he, "this is no part of my business: what remains for me to do on this occasion is to present her account; and let me add that I am instructed to say that, if you come to a proper understanding with her on the first point, no further notice will be taken of this last part of my client's demand."

The unfortunate Mr. Schnackenberger considered the case

most ruefully and in awful perturbation. He perspired exceedingly. However, at length—"Come, I don't care," said he, "I know what I'll do": and then, sitting down, he drew up a paper, which he presented to Mr. Attorney; at the same time, explaining to him that, rather than be exposed in a court of justice as a supposed lover of Mrs. Sweetbread's, he was content to pay the monstrous charges of her bill without applying to a magistrate for his revision: but upon this condition only, that Mrs. Sweetbread should for herself, heirs, and assigns, execute a general release with regard to Mr. Jeremiah Schnackenberger's body, according to the form here drawn up by himself, and should engage on no pretence whatever to set up any claim to him in times to come.

The attorney took his leave for the purpose of laying this *release* before his client; but the landlord of the Double-Barrelled Gun, to whom in confidence Mr. Jeremiah disclosed his perilous situation, shook his head, and said that, if the other party signed the release on the conditions offered, it would be fortunate: as in that case, Mr. Schnackenberger would come off on much easier terms than twenty-three other gentlemen had done, who had all turned into the Golden Sow on different occasions, but not one of whom had ever got clear of the Golden Sow without an expensive contest at law. "God bless my soul!" said Mr. Schnackenberger, who now "funked"[1] enormously; "if that's the case, she might well have so much spare room to offer me. Twenty-three gentlemen! God bless my soul!"

At this instant, a servant brought back the shoes and clothes of Mr. Schnackenberger's own manufacture, which had been pulled off and left at the hotel of the princess. The student gave up the pumps and the borrowed coat to the astonished servant, with an assurance that he would wait on her Highness and make his personal excuses to her, on account of "a little accident" which had that morning befallen the coat. He then despatched his own coat to a quarter where something or other might be done to fit it for this sublunary world.

[1] If any reader should happen not to be acquainted with this word, —which, however, is fine old English, and classical at Eton, &c.,—the nearest synonyme which I remember at this moment is *Expavesco*.

Chapter XIV

In what way Mr. Jeremiah supplies the want of his Coat

The play-hour was arrived; and yet no coat was forthcoming from the tailor: on the contrary, the tailor himself was gone to the play. The landlord of the Double-Barrelled Gun, who would readily have lent one, was off upon a rural excursion, and not expected at home before the next morning; and the waiter, whose assistance would not have been disdained in such a pressing emergency, was of so spare and meagre a habit that, in spite of furious exertions on the part of Mr. Schnackenberger, John's coat would not let itself be entered upon by this new tenant. In this exigency, John bethought him of an old clothesman in the neighbourhood. There he made inquiries. But he, alas! was out on his summer rounds with his whole magazine of clothes; no one article being left with his wife, except a great box-coat, such as is technically called a "dreadnought," for which it was presumed that no demand could possibly arise at this season of the year.

On this report being made, to the great astonishment of the waiter, Mr. Jeremiah said, "Well, then, let us have the dreadnought. If the Fates ordain that I should go to the play in the dog-days apparelled in a dreadnought, let not me vainly think of resisting their decrees."

"But," said the waiter, shrugging his shoulders, "the people——"

"The what?" said Mr. Schnackenberger: "the *people*—was it you said; the *people*? Pray how many people do you reckon to a man? No, sir, do as I bid you; just bring me the dreadnought and a round hat."

The waiter obeyed: and, although the dreadnought was by one good ell too short, yet Mr. Jeremiah exulted in his strange apparel, because he flattered himself that in such a disguise he could preserve a strict incognito; with a view to which he also left Juno behind, recommending her to the vigilant attentions of the waiter.

Chapter XV

Which contains a Play within a Play

All the world was astonished when from the door of the Double-Barrelled Gun a man stepped forth on the hottest day in August arrayed as for a Siberian winter in a dreadnought, guarded with furs, and a hat pressed down, so as almost to cover his face. The train of curious persons who attended his motions naturally grew larger at every step.

Whosoever had hitherto doubted whether this man were mad doubted no longer when he was seen to enter the theatre ; where in the lightest summer-clothing the heat was scarcely supportable.

Within the theatre, the attention of all people was directed so undividedly upon himself that even Mr. Schnackenberger began to opine that he had undertaken something extraordinary : so much the more, thought he, will it be prudent to hide my face, that I may not again compromise my dignity in the presence of her Highness. But this concealment of his face raised the strongest suspicions against him. Throughout the whole house — pit, boxes, and galleries—there was but one subject of conversation ; viz. the man in the dreadnought ; and, whilst in all other parts the house was crowded to excess, upon *his* bench no soul would sit, and he *created* as much superfluity of room as he had *found* at the Golden Sow. At length the manager waited upon him, and requested that he would either retire from the theatre, or that he would explain what could have induced him to make his appearance in a costume which had spread alarm and anxiety through the public mind, and which was likely to do a serious injury to the receipts of the night.

At this moment several children began to cry—taking him for the Black Robert.[1] The consequence was that, as

[1] In the original *Knecht Rupert*. The allusion is to an old Christmas usage of North Germany : a person comes in disguise, in the character of an ambassador from heaven, with presents for all the young children who are reported to him as good and obedient ; but those who are naughty he threatens and admonishes. See Coleridge's *Friend*, vol. ii, p. 322.

they could not be pacified, the first scene was mere dumb show to the audience, and some giddy young people set up a loud "Off, off, Dreadnought!"—which cry was instantly seconded by the public. Nevertheless, as the princess at that moment entered her box, Mr. Schnackenberger, however hard pressed, thought it became him to maintain his post to the last extremity. This extremity forthwith appeared in the shape of three armed soldiers, who, on behalf of the police, took him into custody. Possibly Mr. Jeremiah might have shown himself less tractable to the requests of these superannuated antiquities—but for two considerations: first, that an opportunity might thus offer of exchanging his dreadnought for a less impressive costume; and, secondly, that, in case of his declining to accompany them, he saw signs abroad that a generous and enlightened public did very probably purpose to kick him out,—a conjecture which was considerably strengthened by the universal applause which attended his exit at quick time.

Mr. Schnackenberger was escorted by an immense retinue of old street-padders and youthful mudlarks to the city gaol. His own view of the case was that the public had been guilty of a row, and ought to be arrested. But the old Mayor, who was half-deaf, comprehended not a syllable of what he said: all his remonstrances about "pressing business" went for nothing: and, when he made a show of escaping upon seeing the gloomy hole into which he was now handed, his worship threatened him with drawing out the city guard.

From one of this respectable body, who brought him straw to lie upon, and the wretched prison allowance of food, he learned that his examination could not take place that day nor even the next; for the next was a holiday, on which Mr. Mayor never did any business. On receiving this dolorous information, Mr. Schnackenberger's first impulse was to knock down his informant and run away: but a moment's consideration satisfied him that, though he might by this means escape from his cell, he could have no chance of forcing the prison gates.

Chapter XVI

In what way Mr. Jeremiah escapes; and what he finds in the street

A most beautiful moonlight began at this juncture to throw its beams on the prison, when Mr. Schnackenberger, starting up from his sleepless couch, for pure rage, seized upon the iron bars of the window, and shook them with a fervent prayer that instead of bars it had pleased God to put Mr. Mayor within his grasp. To his infinite astonishment, the bars were more obedient to his wrath than could have been expected. One shake more, and like a row of carious teeth they were all in Mr. Schnackenberger's hand.

It may be supposed that Mr. Schnackenberger lost no time in using his good fortune; indeed, a very slight jump would suffice to place him at liberty. Accordingly, when the sentinel had retired to a little distance, he flung his dreadnought out of the window—leaped upon it—and stood without injury on the outside of the prison.

"Who goes there?" cried the alarmed sentinel, coyly approaching the spot from which the noise issued.

"Nobody," said the fugitive: and, by way of answer to the challenge—"Speak, or I must fire"—which tremulously issued from the lips of the city hero, Mr. Schnackenberger, gathering up his dreadnought to his breast, said in a hollow voice, "Fellow, thou art a dead man."

Straightway the armed man fell upon his knees before him, and cried out—"Ah! gracious sir! have mercy upon me. I am a poor wig-maker; and a bad trade it is; and I petitioned his worship, and have done for this many a year, to be taken into the city guard; and yesterday I passed——"

"Passed what?"

"Passed my examination, your honour:—his worship put me through the manual exercise: and I was 'triculated into the corps. It would be a sad thing, your honour, to lose my life the very next day after I was 'triculated."

"Well," said Mr. Jeremiah, who with much ado forbore laughing immoderately, "for this once I shall spare your life: but then remember—not a word, no sound or syllable."

"Not one, your honour, I vow to heaven."

"And down upon the spot deliver me your coat, side arms, and hat."

But the martial wig-maker protested that, being already ill of a cold, he should, without all doubt, perish if he were to keep guard in his shirt-sleeves.

"Well, in that case, this dreadnought will be a capital article: allow me to prescribe it—it's an excellent sudorific."

Necessity has no law: and so, to save his life, the city hero, after some little struggle, submitted to this unusual exchange.

"Very good!" said Mr. Schnackenberger, as the warrior in the dreadnought, after mounting his round hat, again shouldered his musket:—"Now, good-night"; and, so saying, he hastened off to the residence of the Mayor.

Chapter XVII

Mr Jeremiah's Night Interview with the Mayor upon State Affairs

"Saints in heaven! is this the messenger of the last day?" screamed out a female voice, as the door-bell rang out a furious alarum—peal upon peal—under that able performer, Mr. Jeremiah Schnackenberger. She hastened to open the door; but, when she beheld a soldier in the state uniform, she assured him it was all over with him; for his worship was gone to bed; and, when *that* was the case, he never allowed of any disturbance without making an example.

"Ay, but I come upon state-business."

"No matter," said the old woman, "it's all one: when his worship sleeps, business must sleep: that's the law, I'll assure you, and *has* been any time since I can think on. He always commits, at the least."

"Very likely; but I *must* speak to him."

"Well, then, take the consequences on yourself," said she: "recollect, you're a state soldier; you'll be brought to a court-martial; you'll be shot."

"Ah! well: that's *my* concern."

"Mighty well," said the old woman: "one may as well speak to the wind. However, *I*'ll get out of the way: *I*'ll not come near the hurricane. And don't you say I didn't warn you."

So saying, she led him up to her master's bed-room door, and then trotted off as fast and as far as she could.

At this moment Mr. Mayor, already wakened and discomposed by the violent tintinnabulation, rushed out: "What!" said he, "am I awake? Is it a guardsman that has this audacity?"

"No guardsman, Mr. Mayor," said our hero; in whose face his worship was vainly poring with the lamp to spell out the features of some one amongst the twelve members of the state guard; "no guardsman, but a gentleman that was apprehended last night at the theatre."

"Ah!" said the Mayor trembling in every limb, "a prisoner, and escaped? And perhaps has murdered the guard!—What would you have of me—me, a poor, helpless, unfortunate man?"

And, at every word he spoke, he continued to step back towards a bell that lay upon the table.

"*Basta*," said Mr. Schnackenberger, taking the bell out of his hands. "Mr. Mayor, I'm just the man in the dreadnought. And I've a question to ask you, Mr. Mayor; and I thought it was rather long to wait until morning; so I took the liberty of coming for an answer to-night; and I'd think myself particularly obliged to you for it now:—Upon what authority do you conceive yourself entitled to commit me, an innocent man, and without a hearing, to an abominable hole of a dungeon? I have not murdered the guard, Mr. Mayor: but I troubled him for his regimental coat, that I might gain admittance to your worship; and I left him the dreadnought in exchange."

"The dreadnought?" said the Mayor. "Ay: now, this very dreadnought it was, sir, that compelled me (making a low bow) to issue my warrant for your apprehension." And it then came out that in a list of stolen goods recently lodged with the magistrates a dreadnought was particularly noticed; and Mr. Mayor, having seen a man enter the theatre in an article answering to the description, and easily identified by a black cross embroidered upon the back, was obliged by his duty to have him arrested; more especially as the wearer had increased the suspicion against himself by concealing his face.

This explanation naturally reconciled Mr. Schnackenberger to the arrest: and, as to the filthy dungeon, *that* admitted of a still simpler apology, as it seemed that the town afforded no better.

"Why, then, Mr. Mayor,—as things stand, it seems to me that in the point of honour I ought to be satisfied; and in that case I still consider myself your prisoner, and shall take up my quarters for this night in your respectable mansion."

"But no!" thought Mr. Mayor: "better let a rogue escape than keep a man within my doors that may commit a murder on my body." So he assured Mr. Schnackenberger that he had accounted in the most satisfactory manner for being found in possession of the dreadnought; took down the name of the old clothesman from whom it was hired; and, lighting down his now discharged prisoner, he declared, with a rueful attempt at smiling, that it gave him the liveliest gratification on so disagreeable an occasion to have made so very agreeable an acquaintance.

Chapter XVIII

Misery acquaints Mr. Schnackenberger with strange bed-fellows

When Mr. Schnackenberger returned home from his persecutions, he found the door of the Double-Barrelled Gun standing wide open: and, as he had observed a light in his own room, he walked right upstairs without disturbing the sleeping waiter. But, to his great astonishment, two gigantic fellows were posted outside the door; who, upon his affirming that he must be allowed to enter his own room, seemed in some foreign and unintelligible language to support the negative of that proposition. Without further scruple or regard to their menacing gestures, he pressed forwards to the chamber door; but immediately after felt himself laid hold of by the two fellows—one at his legs, the other at his head—and, spite of his most indignant protests, carried downstairs into the yard. There he was tumbled into a little *depôt* for certain four-footed animals with whose golden representative he had so recently formed an acquaintance no less intimate;—and, the height of the building not allowing

of his standing upright, he was disposed to look back with sorrow to the paradise lost of his station upon the back of the quiet animal whom he had ridden on the preceding day. Even the dungeon appeared an elysium in comparison with his present lodgings, where he felt the truth of the proverb brought home to him—that it is better to be alone than in bad company.

Unfortunately, the door being fastened on the outside, there remained nothing else for him to do than to draw people to the spot by a vehement howling. But, the swine being disturbed by this unusual outcry, and a general uproar taking place among the inhabitants of the stye, Mr. Schnackenberger's single voice, suffocated by rage, was overpowered by the swinish accompaniment. Some little attention was, however, drawn to the noise amongst those who slept near to the yard; but, on the waiter's assuring them that it was "only a great pig who would soon be quiet," that the key could not be found, and no locksmith was in the way at that time of night, the remonstrants were obliged to betake themselves to the same remedy of patience which by this time seemed to Mr. Jeremiah also the sole remedy left to himself.

Chapter XIX

Whose end reconciles our Hero with its beginning

Mr. Schnackenberger's howling had (as the waiter predicted) gradually died away, and he was grimly meditating on his own miseries, to which he had now lost all hope of seeing an end before daylight, when the sudden rattling of a key at the yard door awakened flattering hopes in his breast. It proved to be the waiter, who came to make a gaol delivery, and on letting him out said, "I am commissioned by the gentlemen to secure your silence,"—at the same time putting into his hand a piece of gold.

"The d—l take your gold!" said Mr. Schnackenberger: "is this the practice at your house—first to abuse your guests, and then have the audacity to offer them money?"

"Lord protect us!" said the waiter, now examining his face, "is it you? but who would ever have looked for you

in such a dress as this? The gentlemen took you for one of the police. Lord! to think what a trouble you'll have had!"

And it now came out that a party of foreigners had pitched upon Mr. Jeremiah's room as a convenient one for playing at hazard and some other forbidden games, and, to prevent all disturbance from the police, had posted their servants, who spoke not a word of German, as sentinels at the door.

"But how came you to let my room for such a purpose?"

"Because we never expected to see you to-night; we had heard that the gentleman in the dreadnought had been taken up at the theatre, and committed. But the gentlemen are all gone now; and the room's quite at your service."

Mr. Schnackenberger, however, who had lost the first part of the night's sleep from suffering, was destined to lose the second from pleasure; for the waiter now put into his hands the following billet: "No doubt you must have waited for me to no purpose in the passages of the theatre; but alas! our firmest resolutions we have it not always in our power to execute, and on this occasion I found it quite impossible consistently with decorum to separate myself from my attendants. Will you therefore attend the hunt to-morrow morning? there I hope a better opportunity will offer."

It added to his happiness on this occasion that the princess had manifestly not detected him as the man in the dreadnought.

Chapter XX

In which Mr. Schnackenberger acts upon the ambitious feelings of a man in office for an amiable purpose

Next morning, when the Provost-marshal came to fetch back the appointments of the military wig-maker, it struck our good-natured student that he had very probably brought the poor fellow into an unpleasant scrape. He felt, therefore, called upon as a gentleman to wait upon the Mayor, and do his best to beg him off. In fact, he arrived just in time; for all the arrangements were complete for demonstrating to the poor wig-maker, by an *a posteriori* line of

argument, the importance of valour in his new employment.

Mr. Schnackenberger entreated the Mayor to be lenient. Courage, he said, was not every man's business: as a wig-maker, the prisoner could have had little practice in that virtue: the best of wigs were often made by cowards: "and even as a soldier," said he, "it's odds if there should be such another alarm for the next hundred years." But all in vain: his judge was too much incensed: "Such a scandalous dereliction of duty!" said he. "No, no: I must make an example of him."

Hereupon, Mr. Jeremiah observed that wig-makers were not the only people who sometimes failed in the point of courage. "Nay," said he, "I have known even mayors who by no means shone in that department of duty; and, in particular, I am acquainted with some who would look exceedingly blue, ay d—lish blue indeed, if a student whom I have the honour to know should take it into his head to bring before the public a little incident in which they figured, embellished with woodcuts, representing a retreat by forced marches towards a bell in the background."

Mr. Mayor changed colour; and, pausing a little to think, at length he said—"Sir, you are in the right; every man has his weak moments. But it would be unhandsome to expose them to the scoffs of the public."

"Why, yes, upon certain conditions."

"Which conditions I comply with," said his worship; and forthwith he commuted the punishment for a reprimand and a short confinement.

On these terms Mr. Schnackenberger assured him of his entire silence with respect to all that had passed.

Chapter XXI

In which the Hopes of Two Lovers are wrecked at once

"Beg your pardon, sir, are you Mr. Schnackenberger?" said a young man to our hero, as he was riding out of the city gate.

"Yes, sir, I'm the man; what would you have with

me?" and, at the same time looking earnestly at him, he remembered his face amongst the footmen on the birth-night.

"At the Forester's house—about eleven o'clock," whispered the man mysteriously.

"Very good," said Mr. Schnackenberger, nodding significantly; and forthwith, upon the wings of rapturous anticipation, he flew to the place of rendezvous.

On riding into the Forester's courtyard, among several other open carriages, he observed one lined with celestial blue, which, with a strange grossness of taste, exhibited upon the cushions a medley of hams, sausages, &c. On entering the house, he was at no loss to discover the owner of the carriage; for in a window-seat of the bar sate the landlady of the Golden Sow, no longer in widow's weeds, but arrayed in colours brighter than a bed of tulips.

Mr. Schnackenberger was congratulating himself on his quarrel with her, which he flattered himself must preclude all amicable intercourse, when she saw him, and to his horror approached with a smiling countenance. Some overtures towards reconciliation he saw were in the wind; but, as these could not be listened to except on one condition, he determined to meet her with a test question: accordingly, as she drew near, simpering and languishing,

"Have you executed?" said he abruptly, "have you executed?"

"Have I what?" said Mrs. Sweetbread.

"Executed? Have you executed the release?"

"Oh! you bad man! But come now: I know——"

At this moment, however, up came some acquaintances of Mrs. Sweetbread's, who had ridden out to see the hunt; and, whilst her attention was for one moment drawn off to them, Mr. Schnackenberger slipped unobserved into a parlour: it was now half-past ten by the Forester's clock; and he resolved to wait here until the time fixed by the princess. Whilst sitting in this situation, he heard in an adjoining room (separated only by a slight partition) his own name often repeated: the voice was that of Mr. Von Pilsen; loud laughter followed every sentence; and, on attending more closely, Mr. Schnackenberger perceived that he was just terminating an account of his own adventures at the Golden

Sow, and of his consequent embroilment with the amorous landlady. All this, however, our student would have borne with equanimity. But next followed a disclosure which mortified his vanity in the uttermost degree. A few words sufficed to unfold to him that Mr. Von Pilsen, in concert with the waiter of the Double-Barrelled Gun and that young female attendant of the princess whose kitten had been persecuted by Juno, had framed the whole plot, and had written the letters which Mr. Schnackenberger had ascribed to her Highness. He had scarce patience to hear out the remainder. In some way or other, Von Pilsen had so far mistaken our hero as to pronounce him "chicken-hearted"; and, upon this ground, he invited his whole audience to an evening party at the public rooms of the Double-Barrelled Gun—where he promised to play off Mr. Schnackenberger as a glorious exhibition for this night only.

Furious with wrath, and moreover anxious to escape before Von Pilsen and his party should see him, and know that this last forgery no less than the others had succeeded in duping him into a punctual observance of the appointment, Mr. Schnackenberger rushed out of the room, seized his horse's bridle, and was just on the point of mounting, when up came his female tormentor, Mrs. Sweetbread.

"Come, come, now," said she, smiling in her most amiable manner; "we were both under a mistake yesterday morning; and both of us were too hasty. The booby of a lad took you to the Gun, when you wanted nothing but the Sow: you were a little 'fresh' and didn't know it; and I thought you did it on purpose. But I know better now. And here I am to fetch you back to the Sow: so come along; and we'll forget and forgive on both sides."

So saying, she would have taken his arm most lovingly: but Mr. Schnackenberger stoutly refused. He had nothing to do with her but to pay his bill; he wanted nothing of her but his back-sword, which he had left at the Sow; and he made a motion towards his stirrup. But Mrs. Sweetbread laid her hand upon his arm, and asked him tenderly, if her person were then so utterly disgusting to him that, upon thus meeting him again by his own appointment, he had at once forgotten all his proposals?

"Proposals! what proposals?" shrieked the persecuted student; "appointment! what appointment?"

"Oh, you base, low-lived villain! don't you go for to deny it, now: didn't you offer to be reconciled? didn't you bid me to come here, that we might settle all quietly in the forest? Ay, and we *will* settle it: and nothing shall ever part us more; nothing in the world; for what God has joined——"

"Drunken old witch!" interrupted Mr. Jeremiah, now sufficiently admonished by the brandy fumes which assailed him as to the proximate cause of Mrs. Sweetbread's boldness; "seek lovers elsewhere." And, hastily turning round to shake her off, he perceived to his horror that an immense crowd had by this time assembled behind them. In the rear and standing upon the steps of the Forester's house, stood Von Pilsen and his party, convulsed with laughter; immediately below them was the whole body of the hunters, who had called here for refreshment—upon whose faces struggled a mixed expression of merriment and wonder; and at the head of the whole company stood a party of butchers and butchers' boys returning from the hunt, whose fierce looks and gestures made it evident that they sympathized with the wrongs of Mrs. Sweetbread, the relict of a man who had done honour to their body—and were prepared to avenge them in any way she might choose. She, meantime, whose whole mighty love was converted into mighty hatred by the opprobrious words and fierce repulse of Mr. Schnackenberger, called heaven and earth, and all present, to witness her wrongs; protested that he himself appointed the meeting at the Forest-house; and in confirmation drew forth a letter.

At sight of the letter, a rattling peal of laughter from Mr. Von Pilsen left no room to doubt, in our student's mind, from whose witty manufactory it issued; and a rattling peal of wrath from the butchers' boys left no room to doubt in anybody's mind what would be its consequences. The letter was, in fact, pretty much what Mrs. Sweetbread alleged: it contained a large and unlimited offer of Mr. Schnackenberger's large and unlimited person; professed an ardour of passion which could brook no delay; and entreated her to grant him

an interview for the final arrangement of all preliminaries at the Forest-house.

Whilst this letter was reading, Mr. Schnackenberger perceived that there was no time to be lost: no Juno, unfortunately, was present, no "*deus ex machina*" to turn the scale of battle, which would obviously be too unequal, and in any result (considering the quality of the assailants) not very glorious. So, watching his opportunity, he vaulted into his saddle, and shot off like an arrow. Up went the roar of laughter from Von Pilsen and the hunters; up went the roar of fury from the butchers and their boys: in the twinkling of an eye all were giving chase; showers of stones sang through the trees; threats of vengeance were in his ears; butchers' dogs were at his horse's heels; butchers' curses on the wind; a widow's cries hung upon his flight. The hunters joined in the pursuit; a second chase was before them; Mr. Pilsen had furnished them a second game. Again did Mr. Schnackenberger perspire exceedingly; once again did Mr. Schnackenberger "funk" enormously; yet, once again did Mr. Schnackenberger shiver at the remembrance of the Golden Sow, and groan at the name of Sweetbread. He retained, however, presence of mind enough to work away at his spurs incessantly, nor ever once turned his head until he reached the city gates, which he entered at the *pas de charge*, thanking heaven that he was better mounted than on his first arrival at B——

Chapter XXII

It never rains but it pours

Rapidly as Mr. Schnackenberger drove through the gates, he was arrested by the voice of the warder, who cited him to instant attendance at the town-hall. Within the memory of man, this was the first time that any business had been transacted on a holiday; an extraordinary sitting was now being held; and the prisoner under examination was—Juno. "Oh! heaven and its mercies! when will my afflictions cease?" said the exhausted student; "when shall I have a respite?" Respite there could be none at present;

for the case was urgent; and, unless Juno could find good bail, she was certain of being committed on three very serious charges of,—1, trespass; 2, assault and battery; 3, stealing in a dwelling-house. The case was briefly this:—Juno had opened so detestable an overture of howling on her master's departure for the forest that the people at the Double-Barrelled Gun, out of mere consideration for the city of B——, had found it necessary to set her at liberty; whereupon, as if the devil drove her, forthwith the brute had gone off in search of her old young enemy the kitten at the hotel of the princess. She beat up the kitten's quarters again; and again she drove in the enemy pell-mell into her camp in the kitchen. The young mistress of the kitten, out of her wits at seeing her darling's danger, had set down a pail of milk, in which she was washing a Brussels veil and a quantity of Mechlin lace belonging to the princess, and hurried her kitten into a closet. In a moment she returned, and found milk, Brussels veil, Mechlin lace, vanished—evaporated into Juno's throat,—"abiit—evasit—excessit—erupit"! only the milk-pail, upon some punctilio of delicacy in Juno, was still there; and Juno herself stood by, complacently licking her milky lips, and expressing a lively satisfaction with the texture of Flanders manufactures. The princess, vexed at these outrages on her establishment, sent a message to the town-council, desiring that banishment for life might be inflicted on a dog of such revolutionary principles, whose presence (as she understood) had raised a general consternation throughout the city of B——.

Mr. Mayor, however, had not forgotten the threatened report of a certain retreat to a bell, illustrated by woodcuts; and, therefore, after assuring her Highness of his readiness to serve her, he added that measures would be adopted to prevent similar aggressions—but that unhappily, from peculiar circumstances connected with this case, no further severities could be inflicted. Meantime, while this note was writing, Juno had contrived to liberate herself from arrest.

Scarce had she been absent three minutes when in rushed to the town-council the eternal enemy of the mayor—Mr. Deputy Recorder. The large goose's liver, the largest, perhaps, that for some centuries had been bred and

born in B——, and which was destined this very night to have solemnized the anniversary of Mrs. Deputy Recorder's birth: this liver, and no other, had been piratically attacked, boarded, and captured, in the very sanctuary of the kitchen, "by the flibustier (said he), that buccaneer, that Paul Jones of a Juno." Dashing the tears from his eyes, Mr. Deputy Recorder went on to perorate; "I ask," said he, "whether such a Kentucky marauder ought not to be outlawed by all nations, and put to the ban of civilized Europe? If not"—and then Mr. Deputy paused for effect, and struck the table with his fist—"if not, and such principles of jacobinism and French philosophy are to be tolerated, then, I say, there is an end to social order and religion: Sansculoterie, Septemberising, and red night-caps, will flourish over once happy Europe; and the last and best of kings, and our most shining lights, will follow into the same bottomless abyss which has already swallowed up (and his voice faltered) my liver."

"Lights and liver!" said Mr. Schnackenberger; "I suppose you mean liver and lights; but, lord! Mr. Recorder, what a bilious view you take of the case! Your liver weighs too much in this matter; and where that happens a man's judgment is sure to be jaundiced."

However, the council thought otherwise: Mr. Deputy's speech had produced a deep impression; and, upon his motion, they adjudged that, in twelve hours, Juno should be conducted to the frontiers of the city lands, and there solemnly outlawed: after which it should be free to all citizens of B—— to pursue her with fire and sword; and even before that period, if she were met without a responsible guide. Mr. Schnackenberger pleaded earnestly for an extension of the armistice; but then arose, for the second time, with Catonic severity of aspect, Mr. Deputy Recorder. He urged so powerfully the necessity of uncompromising principle in these dangerous times, insisted so cogently on the false humanity of misplaced lenity, and wound up the whole by such a pathetic array of the crimes committed by Juno—of the sausages she had robbed, the rabbits she had strangled, the porcelain she had fractured, the raspberry-vinegar she had spilt, the mutton she had devoted to chops ("her own

'chops,' remember," said Mr. Schnackenberger), the Brussels veil and the Mechlin lace which she had swallowed, the domestic harmony which she had disturbed, the laws of the land which she had insulted and outraged, the peace of mind which she had invaded, "and, finally" (said he), "as if all this were not enough, the liver—the goose's liver—*my* liver—my unoffending liver—("and lights," said Mr. Schnackenberger) which she has burglariously and inhumanly immolated to her brutal propensities": on all this Mr. Deputy executed such a bravura, and the sins of Juno chased each other so rapidly, and assumed so scarlet a hue, that the council instantly negatived her master's proposition: the single dissentient voice being that of Mr. Mayor, who, with tears in his eyes, conjured Mr. Schnackenberger not to confound the innocent with the guilty.

Chapter XXIII

In which Misfortune empties her last Vial upon the Head of Mr. Schnackenberger

Exhausted by the misfortunes of the day, towards evening Mr. Jeremiah was reposing at his length, and smoking in the window-seat of his room. Solemn clouds of smoke expressed the gloomy vapours which rested on his brain. The hours of Juno's life, it seemed to him, were numbered; every soul in B—— was her sworn foe—bipeds and quadrupeds, men, women, dogs, cats, children, kittens, deputy-recorders, rabbits, cooks, legs of mutton, to say nothing of goose-livers, sausages, haunches of venison, and "quilts."—If he were to take country lodgings for her, and to send her out of B——, what awaited her there? Whither could she go but some butcher, some butter-woman, some rough-rider or other, had a private account to settle with her?—"Unhappy creature!" ejaculated the student, "torment of my life!"

At this moment Mr. Schnackenberger's anxious ruminations were further enforced by the appearance of the town-crier under his window. Inert as the town-council were in giving effect to their own resolutions, on this occasion it was clear that they viewed the matter as no joke, and were bent on rigorously following up their sentence. For the crier

proclaimed the decree by beat of drum; explained the provisos of the twelve hours' truce, and enjoined all good citizens and worthy patriots, at the expiration of that period, to put the public enemy to the sword, wherever she should be found, and even to rise *en masse*, if that should be necessary, for the extermination of the national robber—as they valued their own private welfare, or the honour and dignity of the state.

"English fiend!" said Mr. Schnackenberger, "will nothing reclaim thee? Now that I am rid of my German plague, must I be martyred by my English plague?" For be it mentioned that, on our hero's return from the council, he had received some little comfort in his afflictions from hearing that Mrs. Sweetbread had, upon her return to B——, testified her satisfaction with the zealous leader of the butchers' boys by forthwith bestowing upon him her widowed hand and heart, together with the Sow and its appurtenances. "English fiend!" resumed Mr. Schnackenberger, "most *e*dacious and *au*dacious of quadrupeds! can nothing be done for thee! Is it impossible to save thy life?" And again he stopped to ruminate. For her *metaphysics* it was hopeless to cure; but could nothing be done for her *physics*? At the university of X—— she had lived two years next-door neighbour to the Professor of Moral Philosophy, and had besides attended many of his lectures without any sort of benefit to her morals, which still continued of the very worst description. "But could no course of medical treatment," thought her master, "correct her inextinguishable voracity? Could not her pulse be lowered? Might not her appetite, or her courage, be tamed? Would a course of tonics be of service to her? Suppose I were to take her to England to try the effect of her native air; would any of the great English surgeons or physicians be able to prescribe for her effectually? Would opium cure her? Yet there was a case of boulimia at Thoulouse, where the French surgeons caught the patient and saturated him with opium; but it was of no use; for he ate[1] as many children after it as before. Would Mr. Aber-

[1] The man, whose case I have read in some French Medical Memoirs, was a desperate fellow: he cared no more for an ounce of

nethy, with his blue pill and his Rufus pill, be of any service to her? Or the acid bath—or the sulphate of zinc —or the white oxide of bismuth?—or soda water? For, perhaps, her liver may be affected. But, lord! what talk I of her liver? Her liver's as sound as mine. It's her disposition that's in fault; it's her moral principles that are relaxed; and something must be done to brace them. Let me consider."

At this moment a cry of "murder, murder!" drew the student's eyes to the street below him; and there, to afflict his heart, stood his graceless Juno, having just upset the servant of a cook's shop, in the very act of rifling her basket. The sound of the drum was yet ringing through the street; the crowd collected to hear it had not yet withdrawn from the spot; and in this way was Juno expressing her reverence for the proclamation of the town-council of B——.

"Fiend of perdition!" said Mr. Schnackenberger, flinging his darling pipe at her head in the anguish of his wrath, and hastening down to seize her. On arriving below, however, there lay his beautiful sea-foam pipe in fragments upon the stones; but Juno had vanished—to reappear no more in B——.

Chapter XXIV

"*And set you down that in Aleppo once.*"—Othello

The first thing Mr. Schnackenberger did was to draw his purse-strings and indemnify the cook-maid. The next thing Mr. Schnackenberger did was to go into the public-room of the Gun, call for a common pipe, and seat himself growling in a corner.—Of all possible privileges conferred by the laws, the very least desirable is that of being created game: Juno was now invested with that "painful pre-eminence"; she

opium than for a stone of beef, or half a bushel of potatoes: all three would not have made him a breakfast. As to children, he denied in the most tranquil manner that he ate them. "'Pon my honour," he sometimes said, "between ourselves, I never *do* eat children." However, it was generally agreed that he was pædophagous or infantivorous. Some said that he first drowned them; whence I sometimes call him the pædobaptist. Certain it is that, wherever he appeared, a sudden scarcity of children prevailed.—*Note of the Translator.*

was solemnly proclaimed game, and all qualified persons, *i.e.* every man, woman, and child, were legally authorised to sink, burn, or destroy her. "Now, then," said Mr. Schnackenberger to himself, "if such an event should happen —if any kind soul should blow out the frail light of Juno's life—in what way am I to answer the matter to her purchaser, Mr. Fabian Sebastian?" Such were the thoughts which fumed away from the anxious mind of Mr. Schnackenberger in surging volumes of smoke.

Together with the usual evening visitors of the public-rooms at the Gun, were present also Mr. Von Pilsen and his party. Inflamed with wine and insolence, Mr. Von Pilsen began by advancing the following proposition: That in this sublunary world there are marvellous fools. "Upon this hint" he spake; and, "improving" his text into a large commentary, he passed in review various sketches from the life of Mr. Schnackenberger in B——, not forgetting the hunting scene, and everywhere threw in such rich embellishments and artist-like touches that at last the room rang with laughter.

Mr. Jeremiah alone sat moodily in his corner, and moved no muscle of his face; so that even those who were previously unacquainted with the circumstances easily divined at whose expense Mr. Von Pilsen's witty performance proceeded.

At length Von Pilsen rose and said, "Gentlemen, you think, perhaps, that I am this day in the best of all possible humours. Quite the contrary, I assure you: pure fiction—mere counterfeit mirth—put on to disguise my private vexation; for vexed I am, and will be, that I can find nobody on whom to exercise my right arm. Ah! what a heavenly fate were mine if any man would take it into his head to affront me, or if any other man would take it into his head to think that I had affronted him, and would come hither to demand satisfaction!" So saying, he planted himself in a chair in the very middle of the saloon, and ever and anon leered at Mr. Schnackenberger in so singular a manner that no one could fail to see at whom his shafts were pointed.

Still it seemed as if our hero had neither ears nor eyes. For he continued doggedly to work away at his "cloud-com-

pelling" pipe (*νεφελληγερετα Σχνακενβεργερ*), without ever looking at his challenger.

When at length he rose, everybody supposed that probably he had had badgering enough by this time, and meant to decamp quietly. All present were making wry faces, in order to check their bursting laughter, until Mr. Schnackenberger were clear of the room; that done, each prepared to give free vent to his mirth, and high compliments to Mr. Von Pilsen upon the fine style in which he had "done execution upon Cawdor." *De*camping, however, entered not into Mr. Schnackenberger's military plans; he rather meant to *en*camp over against Von Pilsen's position: calmly, therefore, with a leisurely motion, and *gradu militari*, did he advance towards his witty antagonist. The latter looked somewhat paler than usual; but, as this was no time for retreating, and he saw the necessity of conducting the play with spirit to its *dénouement*, he started up, and exclaimed: "Ah, here is the very man I was wishing for! framed after my very heart's longing. Come, dear friend, embrace me: let us have a fraternal hug."

"Basta!" cried Mr. Jeremiah, attaching his shoulder, and squeezing him, with a right hand of "high pressure," down into his chair—"This is a very good story, Mr. Von Pilsen, that you have told us: and pity it were that so good a story should want a proper termination. In future, therefore, my Pilsen,

> 'When you shall these unhappy deeds relate,'

be sure you do not forget the little sequel which I shall furnish: tell it to the end, my Pilsen,

> 'And set you down that in Aleppo once——'"

Here the whole company began to quake with the laughter of anticipation——

> "'And set you down that in Aleppo once——'

when a fribble—a coxcomb—a puppy—dared to traduce a student from the university of X——

> 'I took the circumcised dog by the nose,
> And smote him thus———'"

at the same time breaking his pipe calmly on the very prominent nose of Mr. Von Pilsen.

Inextinguishable laughter followed from all present: Mr. Von Pilsen quitted the room forthwith, and next morning was sought for in vain in B——.

Chapter XXV

Which contains a Duel—and a Death

Scarcely had Mr. Schnackenberger withdrawn to his apartment when a pair of "field-pieces" were heard clattering upstairs—such and so mighty as, among all people that on earth do dwell, no mortal wore, himself only except, and the student, Mr. Fabian Sebastian. Little had he thought under his evening canopy of smoke that Nemesis was treading so closely upon his heels.

"Sir, my brother," began Mr. Student Fabian, "the time is up: and here am I, to claim my rights. Where is the dog? The money is ready: deliver the article, and payment shall be made."

Mr. Schnackenberger shrugged his shoulders.

"Nay, my brother, no jesting (if you please) on such serious occasions: I demand my article."

"What if the article have vanished?"

"Vanished!" said Mr. Fabian; "why, then we must fight, until it comes back again.—Sir, my brother, you have acted nefariously enough in absconding with goods that you had sold: would you proceed to yet greater depths in nefariousness by now withholding from me my own article?"

So saying, Mr. Fabian paid down the purchase money in hard gold upon the table. "Come, now, be easy," said Mr. Schnackenberger, "and hear me."

"Be easy, do you say? *That* will I not; but hear I will, and with all my heart, provided it be nothing unhearable—nor anything in question of my right to the article: else, you know, come knocks."

"Knocks!" said Jeremiah: "and since when, I should be glad to know, has the Schnackenberger been in the habit

of taking knocks without knocking again, and paying a pretty large percentage?"

"Ah! very likely. That's your concern. As to me, I speak only for myself and for my article." Hereupon Mr. Schnackenberger made him acquainted with the circumstances, which were so unpalatable to the purchaser of "the article" that he challenged Mr. Schnackenberger to single combat there and then.

"Come," said Mr. Fabian; "but first put up the purchase money: for I, at least, will practise nothing that is nefarious."

Mr. Schnackenberger did so; redeemed his sword from Mrs. Sweetbread by settling her bill; buckled it on; and attended Mr. Fabian to the neighbouring forest.

Being arrived at a spot suitable to their purpose, and their swords drawn, Mr. Schnackenberger said—"Upon my word it's a shocking thing that we must fight upon this argument: not but it's just what I have long expected. Junonian quarrels I have had, in my time, 747; and a Junonian duel is nothing more than I have foreseen for this last week. Yet, after all, brother, I give you my honour that the brute is not worth a duel; for, fools as we have been in our rivalship about her, between ourselves she is a mere agent of the fiend, and minister of perdition, to him who is so unhappy as to call her his."

"Like enough, my brother; haven't a doubt you're in the right, for you know her best: still it would be nefarious in a high degree if our blades were to part without crossing each other. We must tilt a bit: sir, my brother, we must tilt. So lunge away at me; and never fear but I'll lunge as fast as you."

So said—so done: but scarce had Mr. Sebastian pushed his first "carte over the arm," which was well parried by his antagonist, when, with a loud outcry, in rushed Juno; and, without troubling herself about the drawn swords, she drove right at the pit of Mr. Sebastian's stomach, knocked the breath out of his body, the sword out of his hand, and himself upon his back.

"Ah! my goddess, my Juno!" cried Mr. Schnackenberger; "Nec vox hominem sonat, oh Dea certe!"

"Nec vox hominem sonat?" said Mr. Fabian, rising: "for I never heard a voice more like a brute's in my life."

"Down, then, down, Juno," said Mr. Schnackenberger, as Juno was preparing for a second campaign against Mr. Fabian's stomach. Mr. Fabian, on his part, held out his hand to his brother student—saying, "All quarrels are now ended." Mr. Jeremiah accepted his hand cordially. Mr. Fabian offered to resign "the article," however agitating to his feelings. Mr. Jeremiah, though no less agitated, protested he should not.

"I will, by all that's magnanimous," said Mr. Fabian.

"By the memory of Curtius, or whatever else is most sacred in self-sacrifice, you shall not," said Mr. Jeremiah.

"Hear me, thou light of day," said Mr. Fabian, kneeling.

"Hear *me*," interrupted Mr. Jeremiah, kneeling also. Yes, the Schnackenberger knelt, but carefully and by circumstantial degrees; for he was big and heavy as a rhinoceros, and afraid of capsizing, and perspired freely. Mr. Fabian kneeled like a dactyle: Mr. Jeremiah kneeled like a spondee, or rather like a molossus. Juno, meantime, whose feelings were less affected, did not kneel at all; but, like a tribrach, amused herself with chasing a hare which just then crossed one of the forest ridings. A moment after was heard the report of a fowling-piece. Bitter presentiment of the truth caused the kneeling duellists to turn their heads at the same instant. Alas! the subject of their high-wrought contest was no more: English Juno lay stretched in her blood! Up started the "dactyle"; up started the "spondee"; out flew their swords; curses, dactylic and spondaic, began to roll; and the gemini of the university of X., side by side, strode over the Junonicide, who proved to be a forester. The forester wisely retreated, before the storm, into his cottage; from an upper window of which he read to the two coroners, in this inquest after blood, a section of the forest-laws, which so fully justified what he had done that, like the reading of the English riot act, it dispersed the gemini, both dactylic and spondaic, who now held it advisable to pursue the matter no further.

"Sir, my brother," said Mr. Fabian, embracing his friend over the corpse of Juno, "see what comes of our imitating

Kotzebue's plays! Nothing but our nefarious magnanimity was the cause of Juno's untimely end. For, had we, instead of kneeling (which by the way seemed to 'punish' you a good deal), had we, I say, vested the property in one or other of us, she, instead of diverting her *ennui* by hunting, would have been trotting home by the side of her master—and the article would have been still living."

Chapter XXVI

The Funeral Games

"Now, then," said Mr. Schnackenberger, entering the Double-Barrelled Gun with his friend,—"Now, waiter, let us have Rhenish and Champagne, and all other good things with which your Gun is charged: fire off both barrels upon us: come, you dog, make ready—present; for we solemnize a funeral to-day": and, at the same time, he flung down the purchase-money of Juno upon the table. The waiter hastened to obey his orders.

The longer the two masters of Juno drank together, the more did they convince themselves that her death was a real blessing to herself, who had thus obviously escaped a life of severe cudgelling, which her voracity would have entailed upon her. "Yes," they both exclaimed: "a blessing to herself—to her friends in particular—and to the public in general."

To conclude, the price of Juno was honourably drunk up to the last farthing, in celebration of her obsequies, at this one sitting.

Ὣς οἳγ' ἀμφιεπον ταφον Ἕκτορος ἱπποδαμοιο.

THE DICE

FROM THE GERMAN [1]

For more than 150 years had the family of Schroll been settled at Taubendorf, and generally respected for knowledge and refinement of manners superior to its station. Its present representative, the bailiff Elias Schroll, had in his youth attached himself to literature, but, later in life, from love to the country, he had returned to his native village, and lived there in great credit and esteem.

During this whole period of 150 years, tradition had recorded only one single Schroll as having borne a doubtful character; he, indeed, as many persons affirmed, had dealt with the devil. Certain it is that there was still preserved in the house a scrutoire fixed in the wall and containing some mysterious manuscripts attributed to him, and the date of the year, 1630, which was carved upon the front, tallied with his era. The key of this scrutoire had been constantly handed down to the eldest son through five generations, with a solemn charge to take care that no other eye or ear should ever become acquainted with its contents. Every precaution had been taken to guard against accidents or oversights: the lock was so constructed that even with the right key it could not be opened without special instructions; and for still greater security the present proprietor had added a padlock of most elaborate workmanship, which presented a sufficient obstacle before the main lock could be approached.

[1] From the *London Magazine* for August 1823; reprinted by De Quincey in 1859 in vol. xi of his Collective Edition.—M.

In vain did the curiosity of the whole family direct itself to this scrutoire. Nobody had succeeded in discovering any part of its contents, except Rudolph, the only son of the bailiff; he *had* succeeded: at least his own belief was that the old folio with gilt edges, and bound in black velvet, which he had one day surprised his father anxiously reading, belonged to the mysterious scrutoire; for the door of the scrutoire, though not open, was unlocked, and Elias had hastily closed the book with great agitation, at the same time ordering his son out of the room in no very gentle tone. At the time of this incident Rudolph was about twelve years of age.

Since that time the young man had sustained two great losses in the deaths of his excellent mother and a sister tenderly beloved. His father also had suffered deeply in health and spirits under these afflictions. Every day he grew more fretful and humoursome; and Rudolph, upon his final return home from school in his eighteenth year, was shocked to find him greatly altered in mind as well as in person. His flesh had fallen away, and he seemed to be consumed by some internal strife of thought. It was evidently his own opinion that he was standing on the edge of the grave; and he employed himself unceasingly in arranging his affairs, and in making his successor acquainted with all such arrangements as regarded his more peculiar interests. One evening, as Rudolph came in suddenly from a neighbour's house, and happened to pass the scrutoire, he found the door wide open, and the inside obviously empty. Looking round, he observed his father standing on the hearth close to a great fire, in the midst of which was consuming the old black book.

Elias entreated his son earnestly to withdraw, but Rudolph could not command himself; and he exclaimed, "I doubt, I doubt, sir, that this is the book which belongs to the scrutoire."

His father assented with visible confusion.

"Well, then, allow me to say that I am greatly surprised at your treating in this way an heirloom that for a century and more has always been transmitted to the eldest son."

"You are in the right, my son," said the father affectionately, taking him by the hand. "You are partly in the right; it is not quite defensible, I admit; and I myself have had many scruples about the course I have taken. Yet still I feel myself glad upon the whole that I have destroyed this accursed book. He that wrote it never prospered; all traditions agree in that; why then leave to one's descendants a miserable legacy of unhallowed mysteries?"

This excuse, however, did not satisfy Rudolph. He maintained that his father had made an aggression upon his rights of inheritance; and he argued the point so well that Elias himself began to see that his son's complaint was not altogether groundless. The whole of the next day they behaved to each other not unkindly, but yet with some coolness. At night Elias could bear this no longer, and he said, "Dear Rudolph, we have lived long together in harmony and love; let us not begin to show an altered countenance to each other during the few days that I have yet to live."

Rudolph pressed his father's offered hand with a filial warmth; and the latter went on to say, "I purpose now to communicate to you by word of mouth the contents of the book which I have destroyed. I will do this with good faith and without reserve, unless you yourself can be persuaded to forgo your own right to such a communication."

Elias paused, flattering himself as it seemed that his son *would* forgo his right. But in this he was mistaken; Rudolph was far too eager for the disclosure, and earnestly pressed his father to proceed.

Again Elias hesitated, and threw a glance of profound love and pity upon his son—a glance that conjured him to think better, and to waive his claim; but, this being at length obviously hopeless, he spoke as follows: "The book relates chiefly to yourself; it points to you as *to the last of our race.* You turn pale. Surely, Rudolph, it would have been better that you had resolved to trouble yourself no further about it?"

"No," said Rudolph, recovering his self-possession. "No; for it still remains a question whether this prophecy be true."

"It does so ; it does, no doubt."

"And is this all that the book says in regard to me ?"

"No, it is *not* all ; there is something more. But possibly you will only laugh when you hear it ; for at this day nobody believes in such strange stories. However, be *that* as it may, the book goes on to say, plainly and positively, that the Evil One (Heaven protect us !) will make you an offer tending greatly to your worldly advantage."

Rudolph laughed outright, and replied that, judging by the grave exterior of the book, he had looked to hear of more serious contents.

"Well, well, my son," said the old man, "I know not that I myself am disposed to place much confidence in these tales of contracts with the devil. But, true or not, we ought not to laugh at them. Enough for me that under any circumstances I am satisfied you have so much natural piety that you would reject all worldly good fortune that could meet you upon unhallowed paths."

Here Elias would have broken off, but Rudolph said, "One thing more I wish to know : What is to be the nature of the good fortune offered to me ? And did the book say whether I should accept it or not ?"

"Upon the nature of the good fortune the writer has not explained himself ; all that he says is that, by a discreet use of it, it is in your power to become a very great man. Whether you will accept it — but God preserve thee, my child, from any thought so criminal !—upon this question there is a profound silence. Nay, it seems even as if this trader in black arts had at that very point been overtaken by death, for he had broken off in the very middle of a word. The Lord have mercy upon his soul !"

Little as Rudolph's faith was in the possibility of such a proposal, yet he was uneasy at his father's communication, and visibly disturbed ; so that the latter said to him, "Had it not been better, Rudolph, that you had left the mystery to be buried with me in the grave ?"

Rudolph said "No" : but his restless eye and his agitated air too evidently approved the accuracy of his father's solicitude.

The deep impression upon Rudolph's mind from this

conversation—the last he was ever to hold with his father—was rendered still deeper by the solemn event which followed. About the middle of that same night he was awakened suddenly by a summons to his father's bedside; his father was dying, and earnestly asking for him.

"My son!" he exclaimed with an expression of the bitterest anguish; stretched out both his arms in supplication towards him; and in the anguish of the effort he expired.

The levity of youthful spirits soon dispersed the gloom which at first hung over Rudolph's mind. Surrounded by jovial companions at the university which he now visited, he found no room left in his bosom for sorrow or care: and his heaviest affliction was the refusal of his guardian at times to comply with his too frequent importunities for money.

After a residence of one year at the university, some youthful irregularities in which Rudolph was concerned subjected him, jointly with three others, to expulsion. Just at that time the Seven Years' War happened to break out: two of the party, named Theiler and Werl, entered the military service together with Rudolph,—the last very much against the will of a young woman to whom he was engaged. Charlotte herself, however, became reconciled to this arrangement when she saw that her objections availed nothing against Rudolph's resolution, and heard her lover describe in the most flattering colours his own return to her arms in the uniform of an officer; for that his distinguished courage must carry him in the very first campaign to the rank of lieutenant was as evident to his own mind as that he could not possibly fall on the field of battle.

The three friends were fortunate enough to be placed in the same company. But, in the first battle, Werl and Theiler were stretched lifeless by Rudolph's side,—Werl by a musket ball through his heart, and Theiler by a cannon shot which took off his head.

Soon after this event, Rudolph himself returned home; but how? Not, as he had fondly anticipated, in the brilliant decorations of a distinguished officer, but as a prisoner in close custody: in a transport of youthful anger

he had been guilty, in company with two others, of insubordination and mutiny.

The court-martial sentenced them to death. The judges, however, were so favourably impressed by their good conduct whilst under confinement that they would certainly have recommended them unconditionally to the royal mercy, if it had not been deemed necessary to make an example. However, the sentence was so far mitigated that only one of the three was to be shot. And which was he? That point was reserved in suspense until the day of execution, when it was to be decided by the cast of the dice.

As the fatal day drew near, a tempest of passionate grief assailed the three prisoners. One of them was agitated by the tears of his father; the second by the sad situation of a sickly wife and two children. The third, Rudolph, in case the lot fell upon him, would be summoned to part not only with his life, but also with a young and blooming bride, that lay nearer to his heart than anything else in the world. "Ah!" said he on the evening before the day of final decision, "Ah! if but this once I could secure a lucky throw of the dice!" And scarce was the wish uttered when his comrade Werl, whom he had seen fall by his side in the field of battle, stepped into his cell.

"So, brother Schroll, I suppose you didn't much expect to see me?"

"No, indeed, did I not," exclaimed Rudolph in consternation; for, in fact, on the next day after the battle he had seen with his own eyes this very Werl committed to the grave.

"Ay, ay, it's strange enough, I allow; but there are not many such surgeons as he is that belongs to our regiment; he had me dug up, and brought me round again, I'll assure you. One would think the man was a conjuror. Indeed, there are many things he can do which I defy any man to explain; and, to say the truth, I'm convinced he can execute impossibilities."

"Well, so let him, for aught that I care; all his art will scarcely do me any good."

"Who knows, brother? who knows? The man is in this town at this very time; and for old friendship's sake

I've just spoken to him about you; and he has promised me a lucky throw of the dice, that shall deliver you from all danger."

"Ah!" said the dejected Rudolph, "but even this would be of little service to me."

"Why, how so?" asked the other.

"How so? Why, because—even if there were such dice (a matter I very much dispute)—yet I could never allow myself to turn aside, by black arts, any bad luck designed for myself upon the heads of either of my comrades."

"Now, this, I suppose, is what you call being noble? But excuse me if I think that in such cases one's first duty is to one's-self."

"Ay, but just consider; one of my comrades has an old father to maintain, the other a sick wife with two children."

"Schroll, Schroll, if your young bride were to hear you, I fancy she wouldn't think herself much flattered. Does poor Charlotte deserve that you should not bestow a thought on her and her fate? A dear young creature, that places her whole happiness in you, has nearer claims (I think) upon your consideration than an old dotard with one foot in the grave, or a wife and two children that are nothing at all to you. Ah! what a deal of good might you do in the course of a long life with your Charlotte! So then, you really are determined to reject the course which I point out to you? Take care, Schroll! If you disdain my offer, and the lot should chance to fall upon you,—take care lest the thought of a young bride whom you have betrayed, take care, I say, lest this thought should add to the bitterness of death when you come to kneel down on the sand-hill. However, I've given you advice sufficient, and have discharged my conscience. Look to it yourself: and farewell!"

"Stay, brother; a word or two," said Rudolph, who was powerfully impressed by the last speech, and the picture of domestic happiness held up before him, which he had often dallied with in thought, both when alone and in company with Charlotte. "Stay a moment. Undoubtedly, I do not deny that I wish for life, if I could receive it a gift from heaven; and *that* is not impossible. Only I would not

willingly have the guilt upon my conscience of being the cause of misery to another. However, if the man you speak of can tell, I should be glad that you would ask him upon which of us three the lot of death will fall. Or—stay ; don't ask him," said Rudolph, sighing deeply.

"I have already asked him," was the answer.

"Ah ! have you so ? *And it is after his reply that you come to me with this counsel ?*"

The foretaste of death overspread the blooming face of Rudolph with a livid paleness ; thick drops of sweat gathered upon his forehead ; and the other exclaimed with a sneer—"I'm going ; you take too much time for consideration. May be you will see and recognise me at the place of execution ; and, if so, I shall have the dice with me ; and it will not be too late even then to give me a sign ; but, take notice, I can't promise to attend."

Rudolph raised his forehead from the palm of his hand, in which he had buried it during the last moments of his perturbation, and would have spoken something in reply ; but his counsellor was already gone. He felt glad, and yet at the same time sorry. The more he considered the man and his appearance, so much the less seemed his resemblance to his friend whom he had left buried on the field of battle. This friend had been the very soul of affectionate cordiality —a temper that was altogether wanting to his present counsellor. No ! the scornful and insulting tone with which he treated the unhappy prisoner, and the unkind manner with which he had left him, convinced Schroll that he and Werl must be two different persons. Just at this moment a thought struck him, like a blast of lightning, of the black book that had perished in the fire and its ominous contents. A lucky cast of the dice ! Ay ; *that* then was the shape in which the tempter had presented himself ; and heartily glad he felt that he had not availed himself of his suggestions.

But this temper of mind was speedily changed by his young bride, who hurried in soon after, sobbing, and flung her arms about his neck. He told her of the proposal which had been made to him ; and she was shocked that he had not immediately accepted it.

With a bleeding heart, Rudolph objected that so charming

and lovely a creature could not miss of a happy fate, even if he should be forced to quit her. But she protested vehemently that he or nobody should enjoy her love.

The clergyman, who visited the prisoner immediately after her departure, restored some composure to his mind, which had been altogether banished by the presence of his bride. "Blessed are they who die in the Lord!" said the grey-haired divine; and with so much earnestness and devotion, that this single speech had the happiest effect upon the prisoner's mind.

On the morning after this night of agitation, the morning of the fatal day, the three criminals saw each other for the first time since their arrest. Community of fate, and long separation from each other, contributed to draw still closer the bond of friendship that had been first knit on the field of battle. Each of the three testified a lively abhorrence for the wretched necessity of throwing death to some one of his comrades by any cast of the dice which should bring life to himself. Dear as their several friends were to all, yet at this moment the brotherly league, which had been tried and proved in the furnace of battle, was triumphant over all opposing considerations. Each would have preferred death himself, rather than escape it at the expense of his comrade.

The worthy clergyman, who possessed their entire confidence, found them loudly giving utterance to this heroic determination. Shaking his head, he pointed their attention to those who had claims upon them whilst living, and for whom it was their duty to wish to live as long as possible. "Place your trust in God!" said he: "resign yourselves to him! He it is that will bring about the decision through your hands; and think not of ascribing that power to yourselves, or to his lifeless instruments—the dice. He, without whose permission no sparrow falls to the ground, and who has numbered every hair upon your head—He it is that knows best what is good for you; and He only."

The prisoners assented by squeezing his hand, embraced each other, and received the sacrament in the best disposition of mind. After this ceremony they breakfasted together, in as resigned, nay, almost in as joyous a mood as if the gloomy

and bloody morning which lay before them were ushering in some gladsome festival.

When, however, the procession was marshalled from the outer gate, and their beloved friends were admitted to utter their last farewells, then again the sternness of their courage sank beneath the burden of their melancholy fate. "Rudolph!" whispered amongst the rest his despairing bride, "Rudolph! why did you reject the help that was offered to you?" He adjured her not to add to the bitterness of parting; and she in turn adjured him, a little before the word of command was given to march—which robbed her of all consciousness—to make a sign to the stranger who had volunteered his offer of deliverance, provided he should anywhere observe him in the crowd.

The streets and the windows were lined with spectators. Vainly did each of the criminals seek, by accompanying the clergyman in his prayers, to shelter himself from the thought that all return, perhaps, was cut off from him. The large house of his bride's father reminded Schroll of a happiness that was now lost to him for ever, if any faith were to be put in the words of his yesterday's monitor; and a very remarkable faintness came over him. The clergyman, who was acquainted with the circumstances of his case, and therefore guessed the occasion of his sudden agitation, laid hold of his arm, and said, with a powerful voice, that he who trusted in God would assuredly see all his *righteous* hopes accomplished—in this world, if it were God's pleasure, but, if not, in a better.

These were words of comfort: but their effect lasted only for a few moments. Outside the city gate his eyes were met by the sand-hill already thrown up; a spectacle which renewed his earthly hopes and fears. He threw a hurried glance about him: but nowhere could he see his last night's visitor.

Every moment the decision came nearer and nearer. It has begun. One of the three has already shaken the box: the die is cast; he has thrown a six. This throw was now registered amidst the solemn silence of the crowd. The bystanders regarded him with silent congratulations in their eyes; for this man and Rudolph were the two special objects

of the general compassion: this man, as the husband and father; Rudolph, as the youngest and handsomest, and because some report had gone abroad of his superior education and attainments.

Rudolph was youngest in a double sense; youngest in years, and youngest in the service: for both reasons he was to throw last. It may be supposed, therefore, how much all present trembled for the poor delinquent, when the second of his comrades likewise flung a six.

Prostrated in spirit, Rudolph stared at the unpropitious die. Then a second time he threw a horrid glance around him, and that so full of despair that from horrid sympathy a violent shuddering ran through the bystanders. "Here is no deliverer," thought Rudolph; "none to see me, or to hear me! And, if there were, it is now too late; for no change of the die is any longer possible." So saying, he seized the fatal die; convulsively his hand clutches it; and before the throw is made he feels that the die is broken in two.

During the universal thrill of astonishment which succeeded to this strange accident, he looked round again. A sudden shock and a sudden joy fled through his countenance. Not far from him, in the dress of a pedlar, stands Theiler without a wound, the comrade whose head had been carried off on the field of battle by a cannon-ball. Rudolph made an under-sign to him with his eye; for, clear as it now was to his mind with whom he was dealing, yet the dreadful trial of the moment overpowered his better resolutions.

The military commission were in some confusion. No provision having been thought of against so strange an accident, there was no second die at hand. They were just on the point of despatching a messenger to fetch one, when the pedlar presented himself with the offer of supplying the loss. The new die is examined by the auditor, and delivered to the unfortunate Rudolph. He throws; the die is lying on the drum, and again it is a six! The amazement is universal; nothing is decided; the throws must be repeated. They *are*; and Weber, the husband of the sick wife, the father of the two half-naked children, flings the lowest throw.

Immediately the officer's voice was heard wheeling his men into their position. On the part of Weber there was as

little delay. The overwhelming injury to his wife and children, inflicted by his own act, was too mighty to contemplate. He shook hands rapidly with his two comrades; stepped nimbly into his place; kneeled down. The word of command was heard, "Lower your muskets"; instantly he dropped the fatal handkerchief with the gesture of one who prays for some incalculable blessing; and, in the twinkling of an eye, sixteen bullets had lightened the heart of the poor mutineer from its whole immeasurable freight of anguish.

All the congratulations with which they were welcomed on their return into the city fell powerless on Rudolph's ear. Scarcely could even Charlotte's caresses affect with any pleasure the man who believed himself to have sacrificed his comrade through collusion with a fiend.

The importunities of Charlotte prevailed over all objections which the pride of her aged father suggested against a son-in-law who had been capitally convicted. The marriage was solemnized; but at the wedding-festival, amidst the uproar of merriment, the parties chiefly concerned were not happy or tranquil. In no long time the father-in-law died, and by his death placed the young couple in a state of complete independence; but Charlotte's fortune, and the remainder of what Rudolph had inherited from his father, were speedily swallowed up by an idle and luxurious mode of living. Rudolph now began to ill-use his wife. To escape from his own conscience, he plunged into all sorts of dissolute courses; and very remarkable it was that, from manifesting the most violent abhorrence for everything which could lead his thoughts to his own fortunate cast of the die, he gradually came to entertain so uncontrollable a passion for playing at dice that he spent all his time in the company of those with whom he could turn this passion to account. His house had long since passed out of his own hands; not a soul could be found anywhere to lend him a shilling. The sickly widow of Weber, and her two children, whom he had hitherto supported, lost their home and means of livelihood, and in no long space of time the same fate fell upon himself, his wife, and his child.

Too little used to labour to have any hope of improving his condition in that way, one day he bethought himself that the Medical Institute was in the habit of purchasing from

poor people, during their lifetime, the reversion of their bodies. To this establishment he addressed himself; and the ravages in his personal appearance and health, caused by his dissolute life, induced them the more readily to lend an ear to his proposal.

But the money thus obtained, which had been designed for the support of his wife and half-famished children, was squandered at the gaming-table. As the last dollar vanished, Schroll bit one of the dice furiously between his teeth. Just then he heard these words whispered at his ear,—"Gently, brother, gently; all dice do not split in two like that on the sand-hill." He looked round in agitation, but saw no trace of any one who could have uttered the words.

With dreadful imprecations on himself and those with whom he had played, he flung out of the gaming-house homewards on his road to the wretched garret where his wife and children were awaiting his return and his succour; but here the poor creatures, tormented by hunger and cold, pressed upon him so importunately that he had no way to deliver himself from misery but by flying from the spectacle. But whither could he go thus late at night, when his utter poverty was known in every alehouse? Roaming he knew not whither, he found himself at length in the churchyard. The moon was shining solemnly upon the quiet grave-stones, though obscured at intervals by piles of stormy clouds. Rudolph shuddered at nothing but at himself and his own existence. He strode with bursts of laughter over the dwellings of the departed, and entered a vault which gave him shelter from the icy blasts of wind which now began to bluster more loudly than before. The moon threw her rays into the vault full upon the golden legend inscribed in the wall,—"*Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord!*" Schroll took up a spade that was sticking in the ground, and struck with it furiously against the gilt letters on the wall, but they seemed indestructible; and he was going to assault them with a mattock, when suddenly a hand touched him on the shoulder, and said to him, "Gently, comrade; thy pains are all thrown away." Schroll uttered a loud exclamation of terror, for in these words he heard the voice of Weber, and, on turning round, recognised his whole person.

"What wouldst thou have?" asked Rudolph. "What art thou come for?"

"To comfort thee," replied the figure, which now suddenly assumed the form and voice of the pedlar to whom Schroll was indebted for the fortunate die. "Thou hast forgotten me; and thence it is that thou art fallen into misfortune. Look up and acknowledge thy friend in need that comes only to make thee happy again."

"If *that* be thy purpose, wherefore is it that thou wearest a shape before which, of all others that have been on earth, I have most reason to shudder?"

"The reason is because I must not allow to any man my help or my converse on too easy terms. Before ever my die was allowed to turn thy fate, I was compelled to give thee certain intimations from which thou knewest with whom it was that thou wert dealing."

"With whom, then, was it that I was dealing?" cried Schroll, staring with his eyes wide open, and his hair standing erect.

"Thou knewest, comrade, at that time; thou knowest at this moment," said the pedlar, laughing, and tapping him on the shoulder. "But what is it that thou desirest?"

Schroll struggled internally; but, overcome by his desolate condition, he said immediately, "Dice: I would have dice that shall win whenever I wish."

"Very well; but first of all stand out of the blaze of this golden writing on the wall; it is a writing that has nothing to do with thee. Here are dice; never allow them to go out of thy own possession; for *that* might bring thee into great trouble. When thou needest me, light a fire at the last stroke of the midnight hour; throw in my dice, and with loud laughter. They will crack once or twice, and then split. At that moment catch at them in the flames; but let not the moment slip, or thou art lost. And let not thy courage be daunted by the sights that I cannot but send before me whensoever I appear. Lastly, avoid choosing any holy day for this work; and beware of the priest's benediction. Here, take the dice."

Schroll caught at the dice with one hand, whilst with the other he covered his eyes. When he next looked up, he was standing alone.

He now quitted the burying-ground to return as hastily as possible to the gaming-house, where the light of candles was still visible. But it was with the greatest difficulty that he obtained money enough from a "friend" to enable him to make the lowest stake which the rules allowed. He found it a much easier task to persuade the company to use the dice which he had brought with him. They saw in this nothing but a very common superstition, and no possibility of any imposture, as they and he should naturally have benefited alike by the good luck supposed to accompany the dice. But the nature of the charm was that only the possessor of the dice enjoyed their supernatural powers; and hence it was that towards morning Schroll reeled home intoxicated with wine and pleasure, and laden with the money of all present, to the garret where his family was lying half frozen and famished.

Their outward condition was immediately improved. The money which Schroll had won was sufficient not only for their immediate and most pressing wants: it was enough also to pay for a front apartment, and to leave a sum sufficient for a very considerable stake.

With this sum, and in better attire, Rudolph repaired to a gaming-house of more fashionable resort, and came home in the evening laden with gold.

He now opened a gaming establishment himself; and so much did his family improve in external appearances within a very few weeks that the police began to keep a watchful eye over him.

This induced him to quit the city, and to change his residence continually. All the different baths of Germany he resorted to beyond other towns: but, though his dice perseveringly maintained their luck, he yet never accumulated any money. Everything was squandered upon the dissipated life which he and his family pursued.

At length, at the Baths of ——, the matter began to take an unfortunate turn. A violent passion for a beautiful young lady whom Rudolph had attached himself to in vain at balls, concerts, and even at church, suddenly bereft him of all sense and discretion. One night, when Schroll (who now styled himself Captain von Schrollshausen) was antici-

pating a master-stroke from his dice, probably for the purpose of winning the lady by the display of overflowing wealth and splendour, suddenly they lost their virtue, and failed him without warning. Hitherto they had lost only when he willed them to lose : but, on this occasion, they failed at so critical a moment as to lose him not only all his own money, but a good deal beside that he had borrowed.

Foaming with rage, he came home. He asked furiously after his wife : she was from home. He examined the dice attentively ; and it appeared to him that they were not his own. A powerful suspicion seized upon him. Madame von Schrollshausen had her own gaming circle as well as himself. Without betraying its origin, he had occasionally given her a few specimens of the privilege attached to his dice : and she had pressed him earnestly to allow her the use of them for a single evening. It was true he never parted with them even on going to bed : but it was possible that they might have been changed whilst he was sleeping. The more he brooded upon this suspicion, the more it strengthened: from being barely possible, it became probable : from a probability it ripened into a certainty ; and this certainty received the fullest confirmation at this moment when she returned home in the gayest temper, and announced to him that she had been this night overwhelmed with good luck ; in proof of which, she poured out upon the table a considerable sum in gold coin. "And now," she added laughingly, "I care no longer for your dice ; nay, to tell you the truth, I would not exchange my own for them."

Rudolph, now confirmed in his suspicions, demanded the dice, as his property that had been purloined from him. She laughed and refused. He insisted with more vehemence ; she retorted with warmth ; both parties were irritated : and, at length, in the extremity of his wrath, Rudolph snatched up a knife and stabbed her ; the knife pierced her heart ; she uttered a single sob, was convulsed for a moment, and expired. "Cursed accident !" he exclaimed, when it clearly appeared, on examination, that the dice which she had in her purse were not those which he suspected himself to have lost.

No eye but Rudolph's had witnessed the murder : the

child had slept on undisturbed: but circumstances betrayed it to the knowledge of the landlord; and, in the morning, he was preparing to make it public. By great offers, however, Rudolph succeeded in purchasing the man's silence: he engaged in substance to make over to the landlord a large sum of money, and to marry his daughter, with whom he had long pursued a clandestine intrigue. Agreeably to this arrangement, it was publicly notified that Madame von Schrollshausen had destroyed herself under a sudden attack of hypochondriasis, to which she had been long subject. Some there were undoubtedly who chose to be sceptics on this matter; but nobody had an interest sufficiently deep in the murdered person to prompt him to a legal inquiry.

A fact which at this time gave Rudolph far more disturbance of mind than the murder of his once beloved wife was the full confirmation, upon repeated experience, that his dice had forfeited their power. For he had now been a loser two days running to so great an extent that he was obliged to abscond on a misty night. His child, towards whom his affection increased daily, he was under the necessity of leaving with his host, as a pledge for his return and fulfilment of his promises. He would not have absconded if it had been in his power to summon his dark counsellor forthwith; but on account of the great festival of Pentecost, which fell on the very next day, this summons was necessarily delayed for a short time. By staying, he would have reduced himself to the necessity of inventing various pretexts for delay, in order to keep up his character with his creditors; whereas, when he returned with a sum of money sufficient to meet his debts, all suspicions would be silenced at once.

In the metropolis of an adjacent territory, to which he resorted so often that he kept lodgings there constantly, he passed Whitsunday with impatience, and resolved on the succeeding night to summon and converse with his counsellor. Impatient, however, as he was of any delay, he did not on that account feel the less anxiety as the hour of midnight approached. Though he was quite alone in his apartments, and had left his servant behind at the baths, yet long before midnight he fancied that he heard footsteps and whisperings

round about him. The purpose he was meditating, that he had regarded till now as a matter of indifference, now displayed itself in its whole monstrous shape. Moreover, he remembered that his wicked counsellor had himself thought it necessary to exhort him to courage, which at present he felt greatly shaken. However, he had no choice. As he was enjoined, therefore, with the last stroke of twelve, he set on fire the wood which lay ready split upon the hearth, and threw the dice into the flames, with a loud laughter that echoed frightfully from the empty hall and staircases. Confused and half stifled by the smoke which accompanied the roaring flames, he stood still for a few minutes, when suddenly all the surrounding objects seemed changed, and he found himself transported to his father's house. His father was lying on his deathbed just as he had actually beheld him. He had upon his lips the very same expression of supplication and anguish with which he had at that time striven to address him. Once again he stretched out his arms in love and pity to his son ; and once again he seemed to expire in the act.

Schroll was agitated by the picture, which called up and reanimated in his memory, with the power of a mighty tormentor, all his honourable plans and prospects from that innocent period of his life. At this moment the dice cracked for the first time ; and Schroll turned his face towards the flames. A second time the smoke stifled the light in order to reveal a second picture. He saw himself on the day before the scene on the sand-hill, sitting in his dungeon. The clergyman was with him. From the expression of his countenance, he appeared to be just saying—"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Rudolph thought of the disposition in which he then was, of the hopes which the clergyman had raised in him, and of the feeling which he then had that he was still worthy to be reunited to his father, or had become worthy by bitter penitence. The next fracture of the die disturbed the scene—but to substitute one that was not at all more consolatory. For now appeared a den of thieves, in which the unhappy widow of Weber was cursing her children, who—left without support, without counsel, without protection—had taken to evil

courses. In the background stood the bleeding father of these ruined children, one hand stretched out towards Schroll with a menacing gesture, and the other lifted towards heaven with a record of impeachment against him.

At the third splitting of the dice, out of the bosom of the smoke arose the figure of his murdered wife, who seemed to chase him from one corner of the room to another, until at length she came and took a seat at the fireplace ; by the side of which, as Rudolph now observed with horror, his buried father and the unhappy Weber had stretched themselves ; and they carried on together a low and noiseless whispering and moaning that agitated him with a mysterious horror.

After long and hideous visions, Rudolph beheld the flames grow weaker and weaker. He approached. The figures that stood round about held up their hands in a threatening attitude. A moment later and the time was gone for ever, and Rudolph, as his false friend had asserted, was a lost man ! With the courage of despair he plunged through the midst of the threatening figures, and snatched at the glowing dice—which were no sooner touched than they split asunder with a dreadful sound, before which the apparitions vanished in a body.

The evil counsellor appeared on this occasion in the dress of a gravedigger, and asked, with a snorting sound,—" What wouldst thou from me ? "

" I would remind you of your promise," answered Schroll, stepping back with awe ; " your dice have lost their power."

" Through whose fault ? "

Rudolph was silent, and covered his eyes from the withering glances of the fiendish being who was gazing upon him.

" Thy foolish desires led thee in chase of the beautiful maiden into the church ; my words were forgotten ; and the benediction, against which I warned thee, disarmed the dice of their power. In future observe my directions better."

So saying, he vanished ; and Schroll found three new dice upon the hearth.

After such scenes sleep was not to be thought of ; and Rudolph resolved, if possible, to make trial of his dice this very night. The ball at the hotel over the way, to which

he had been invited, and from which the steps of the waltzers were still audible, appeared to present a fair opportunity. Thither he repaired ; but not without some anxiety, lest some of the noises in his own lodgings should have reached the houses over the way. He was happy to find this fear unfounded. Everything appeared as if calculated only for *his* senses ; for, when he inquired, with assumed carelessness, what great explosion *that* was which occurred about midnight, nobody acknowledged to having heard it.

The dice also, he was happy to find, answered his expectations. He found a company engaged at play, and, by the break of day, he had met with so much luck that he was immediately able to travel back to the baths, and to redeem his child and his word of honour.

In the baths he now made as many new acquaintances as the losses were important which he had lately sustained. He was reputed one of the wealthiest cavaliers in the place ; and many who had designs upon him in consequence of this reputed wealth willingly lost money to him to favour their own schemes ; so that in a single month he gained sums which would have established him as a man of fortune. Under countenance of this repute, and as a widower, no doubt he might now have made successful advances to the young lady whom he had formerly pursued, for her father had an exclusive regard to property, and would have overlooked morals and respectability of that sort in any candidate for his daughter's hand ; but, with the largest offers of money, he could not purchase his freedom from the contract made with his landlord's daughter—a woman of very disreputable character. In fact, six months after the death of his first wife he was married to her.

By the unlimited profusion of money with which his second wife sought to wash out the stains upon her honour, Rudolph's new-raised property was as speedily squandered. To part from her was one of the wishes which lay nearest his heart. He had, however, never ventured to express it a second time before his father-in-law, for, on the single occasion when he had hinted at such an intention, that person had immediately broken out into the most dreadful threats. The murder of his first wife was the chain which

bound him to his second. The boy whom his first wife had left him, closely as he resembled her in features and in the bad traits of her character, was his only comfort, if indeed his gloomy and perturbed mind would allow him at any time to taste of comfort.

To preserve this boy from the evil influences of the many bad examples about him, he had already made an agreement with a man of distinguished abilities, who was to have superintended his education in his own family. But all was frustrated. Madame von Schrollshausen, whose love of pomp and display led her eagerly to catch at every pretext for creating a *fête*, had invited a party on the evening before the young boy's intended departure. The time which was not occupied in the eating-room was spent at the gaming-table, and dedicated to the dice, of whose extraordinary powers the owner was at this time availing himself with more zeal than usual, having just invested all his disposable money in the purchase of a landed estate. One of the guests, having lost very considerable sums in an uninterrupted train of ill luck, threw the dice, in his vexation, with such force upon the table that one of them fell down. The attendants searched for it on the floor, and the child also crept about in quest of it. Not finding it, he rose, and in rising stept upon it, lost his balance, and fell with such violence against the edge of the stove that he died in a few hours of the injury inflicted on the head.

This accident made the most powerful impression upon the father. He recapitulated the whole of his life from the first trial he had made of the dice; from them had arisen all his misfortunes; in what way could he liberate himself from their accursed influence? Revolving this point, and in the deepest distress of mind, Schroll wandered out towards nightfall and strolled through the town. Coming to a solitary bridge in the outskirts, he looked down from the battlements upon the gloomy depths of the waters below, which seemed to regard him with looks of sympathy and strong fascination. "So be it, then!" he exclaimed, and sprang over the railing; but, instead of finding his grave in the waters, he felt himself below seized powerfully by the grasp of a man, whom, from his scornful laugh, he recognised

as his evil counsellor. The man bore him to the shore, and said, "No, no! my good friend; he that once enters into a league with me, him I shall deliver from death even in his own despite."

Half crazy with despair, the next morning Schroll crept out of the town with a loaded pistol. Spring was abroad; spring flowers, spring breezes, and nightingales.[1] They were all abroad, but not for *him* or *his* delight. A crowd of itinerant tradesmen passed him, who were on the road to a neighbouring fair. One of them, observing his dejected countenance with pity, attached himself to his side, and asked in a tone of sympathy what was the matter. Two others of the passers-by Schroll heard distinctly saying, "Faith, I should not like, for my part, to walk alone with such an ill-looking fellow." He darted a furious glance at the men, separated from his pitying companion with a fervent pressure of his hand, and struck off into a solitary track of the forest. In the first retired spot he fired the pistol; and behold! the man who had spoken to him with so much kindness lies stretched in his blood, and he himself is without a wound. At this moment, while staring half-unconsciously at the face of the murdered man, he feels himself seized from behind. Already he seems to himself in the hands of the public executioner. Turning round, however, he hardly knows whether to feel pleasure or pain on seeing his evil suggester in the dress of a gravedigger. "My friend," said the gravedigger, "if you cannot be content to wait for death until I send it, I must be forced to end with dragging you to *that* from which I began by saving you—a public execution. But think not thus, or by any other way, to escape me. After death, thou wilt assuredly be mine again."

"Who, then," said the unhappy man, "who is the murderer of the poor traveller?"

"Who? why, who but yourself? Was it not yourself that fired the pistol?"

"Ay, but at my own head."

[1] It may be necessary to inform some readers, who have never lived far enough to the south to have any personal knowledge of the nightingale, that this bird sings in the daytime as well as the night.

The fiend laughed in a way that made Schroll's flesh creep on his bones. "Understand this, friend, that he whose fate I hold in my hands cannot anticipate it by his own act. For the present, begone, if you would escape the scaffold. To oblige you once more, I shall throw a veil over this murder."

Thereupon the gravedigger set about making a grave for the corpse, whilst Schroll wandered away—more for the sake of escaping the hideous presence in which he stood than with any view to his own security from punishment.

Seeing by accident a prisoner under arrest at the guard-house, Schroll's thoughts reverted to his own confinement. "How happy," said he, "for me and for Charlotte, had I then refused to purchase life on such terms, and had better laid to heart the counsel of my good spiritual adviser!" Upon this a sudden thought struck him,—that he would go and find out the old clergyman, and would unfold to him his wretched history and situation. He told his wife that some private affairs required his attendance for a few days at the town of ——. But, say what he would, he could not prevail on her to desist from accompanying him.

On the journey his chief anxiety was lest the clergyman, who was already advanced in years at the memorable scene of the sand-hill, might now be dead. But at the very entrance of the town he saw him walking in the street, and immediately felt himself more composed in mind than he had done for years. The venerable appearance of the old man confirmed him still more in his resolution of making a full disclosure to him of his whole past life: one only transaction, the murder of his first wife, he thought himself justified in concealing; since, with all his penitence for it, that act was now beyond the possibility of reparation.

For a long time the pious clergyman refused all belief to Schroll's narrative; but, being at length convinced that he had a wounded spirit to deal with, and not a disordered intellect, he exerted himself to present all those views of religious consolation which his philanthropic character and his long experience suggested to him as likely to be effectual. Eight days' conversation with the clergyman restored Schroll to the hopes of a less miserable future. But the good man

admonished him at parting to put away from himself whatsoever could in any way tend to support his unhallowed connexion.

In this direction Schroll was aware that the dice were included: and he resolved firmly that his first measure on returning home should be to bury in an inaccessible place these accursed implements that could not but bring mischief to every possessor. On entering the inn, he was met by his wife, who was in the highest spirits, and laughing profusely. He inquired the cause. "No," said she: "you refused to communicate your motive for coming hither, and the nature of your business for the last week: I, too, shall have my mysteries. As to your leaving me in solitude at an inn, *that* is a sort of courtesy which marriage naturally brings with it; but that you should have travelled hither for no other purpose than that of trifling away your time in the company of an old tedious parson, *that* (you will allow me to say) is a caprice which seems scarcely worth the money it will cost."

"Who, then, has told you that I have passed my time with an old parson?" said the astonished Schroll.

"Who told me? Why, just let me know what your business was with the parson, and I'll let you know in turn who it was that told me. So much I will assure you, however, now—that the cavalier who was my informant is a thousand times handsomer, and a more interesting companion, than an old dotard who is standing at the edge of the grave."

All the efforts of Madame von Schrollshausen to irritate the curiosity of her husband proved ineffectual to draw from him his secret. The next day, on their return homewards, she repeated her attempts. But he parried them all with firmness. A more severe trial to his firmness was prepared for him in the heavy bills which his wife presented to him on his reaching home. Her expenses in clothes and in jewels had been so profuse that no expedient remained to Schroll but that of selling without delay the landed estate he had so lately purchased. A declaration to this effect was very ill received by his wife. "Sell the estate?" said she; "what? sell the sole resource I shall have to rely on when you are dead? And for what reason, I should be glad to know;

when a very little of the customary luck of your dice will enable you to pay off these trifles? And whether the bills be paid to-day or to-morrow cannot be of any very great importance." Upon this, Schroll declared with firmness that he never meant to play again. "Not play again!" exclaimed his wife; "pooh! pooh! you make me blush for you! So, then, I suppose it's all true, as was said, that scruples of conscience drove you to the old rusty parson; and that he enjoined as a penance that you should abstain from gaming? I was told as much: but I refused to believe it; for in your circumstances the thing seemed too senseless and irrational."

"My dear girl," said Schroll, "consider——"

"Consider! what's the use of considering? what is there to consider about?" interrupted Madame von Schrollshausen; and, recollecting the gay cavalier whom she had met at the inn, she now, for the first time, proposed a separation herself. "Very well," said her husband, "I am content." "So am I," said his father-in-law, who joined them at that moment. "But take notice that first of all I must have paid over to me an adequate sum of money for the creditable support of my daughter: else——"

Here he took Schroll aside, and the old threat of revealing the murder so utterly disheartened him that at length in despair he consented to his terms.

Once more, therefore, the dice were to be tried; but only for the purpose of accomplishing the separation: *that* over, Schroll resolved to seek a livelihood in any other way, even if it were as a day-labourer. The stipulated sum was at length all collected within a few hundred dollars; and Schroll was already looking out for some old disused well into which he might throw the dice, and then have it filled up; for even a river seemed to him a hiding-place not sufficiently secure for such instruments of misery.

Remarkable it was on the very night when the last arrears were to be obtained of his father-in-law's demand—a night which Schroll had anticipated with so much bitter anxiety—that he became unusually gloomy and dejected. He was particularly disturbed by the countenance of a stranger, who for several days running had lost considerable

sums. The man called himself Stutz ; but he had a most striking resemblance to his old comrade Weber, who had been shot at the sand-hill, and differed indeed in nothing but in the advantage of blooming youth. Scarce had he leisure to recover from the shock which this spectacle occasioned when a second occurred. About midnight another man, whom nobody knew, came up to the gaming-table, and interrupted the play by recounting an event which he represented as having just happened. A certain man, he said, had made a covenant with some person or other that they call the Evil One—or what is it you call him ? and by means of this covenant he had obtained a steady run of good luck at play. "Well, sir," he went on, "and would you believe it ? the other day he began to repent of this covenant ; my gentleman wanted to rat, he wanted to rat, sir. Only, first of all, he resolved privately to make up a certain sum of money. Ah, the poor idiot ! he little knew whom he had to deal with : the Evil One, as they choose to call him, was not a man to let himself be swindled in that manner. No, no, my good friend. I saw—I mean, the Evil One saw—what was going on betimes ; and he secured the swindler just as he fancied himself on the point of pocketing the last arrears of the sum wanted."

The company began to laugh so loudly at this pleasant fiction, as they conceived it, that Madame von Schrollshausen was attracted from the adjoining room. The story was repeated to her ; and she was the more delighted with it because in the relater she recognised the gay cavalier whom she had met at the inn. Everybody laughed again, excepting two persons—Stutz and Schroll. The first had again lost all the money in his purse ; and the second was so confounded by the story that he could not forbear staring with fixed eyes on the stranger, who stood over against him. His consternation increased when he perceived that the stranger's countenance seemed to alter at every moment, and that nothing remained unchanged in it except the cold expression of inhuman scorn with which he perseveringly regarded himself.

At length he could endure this no longer : and he remarked, therefore, upon Stutz again losing a bet, that it was now late ; that Mr. Stutz was too much in a run of bad

luck ; and that on these accounts he would defer the further pursuit of their play until another day. And thereupon he put the dice into his pocket.

"Stop!" said the strange cavalier ; and the voice froze Schroll with horror ; for he knew too well to whom that dreadful tone and those fiery eyes belonged.

"Stop!" he said again ; "produce your dice!" And tremblingly Schroll threw them upon the table.

"Ah! I thought as much," said the stranger ; "they are loaded dice!" So saying, he called for a hammer, and struck one of them in two. "See!" said he to Stutz, holding out to him the broken dice, which in fact seemed loaded with lead. "Stop, vile impostor!" exclaimed the young man, as Schroll was preparing to quit the room in the greatest confusion ; and he threw the dice at him, one of which lodged in his right eye. The tumult increased ; the police came in ; and Stutz was apprehended, as Schroll's wound assumed a very dangerous appearance.

Next day Schroll was in a violent fever. He asked repeatedly for Stutz. But Stutz had been committed to close confinement ; it having been found that he had travelled with false passes. He now confessed that he was one of the sons of the mutineer Weber ; that his sickly mother had died soon after his father's execution ; and that himself and his brother, left without the control of guardians, and without support, had taken to bad courses.

On hearing this report, Schroll rapidly worsened ; and he unfolded to a young clergyman his whole unfortunate history. About midnight he sent again in great haste for the clergyman. He came. But at sight of him Schroll stretched out his hands in extremity of horror, and waved him away from his presence ; but before his signals were complied with the wretched man had expired in convulsions.

From his horror at the sight of the young clergyman, and from the astonishment of the clergyman himself on arriving and hearing that he had already been seen in the sick-room, it was inferred that his figure had been assumed for fiendish purposes. The dice and the strange cavalier disappeared at the same time with their wretched victim, and were seen no more.

THE KING OF HAYTI

FROM THE GERMAN [1]

Chapter I

Six weeks after his death stood the bust of the late stamp-distributor Goodchild exposed to public view in the china-manufactory of L——. For what purpose? Simply for this—that he might call heaven and earth to witness that, allowing for some little difference in the colours, he looked just as he did heretofore in life: a proposition which his brother and heir, Mr. Goodchild the merchant, flatly denied. For this denial Mr. Goodchild had his private reasons. "It is true," said he, "my late brother, the stamp-distributor, God rest him! did certainly bespeak three dozen copies of his own bust at the china-works; but surely he bespoke them for his use in this life, and not in the next. His intention, doubtless, was to send a copy to each of those loose companions of his who helped him to run through his fine estate: natural enough for him to propose as a spend-thrift, but highly absurd for me to ratify as executor to so beggarly an inheritance; and therefore assuredly I shall not throw so much money out of the windows."

This was plausible talking to all persons who did not happen to know that the inheritance amounted to twenty-five thousand dollars, and that the merchant Goodchild, as was unanimously affirmed by all the Jews, both Christian

[1] From the *London Magazine* for November 1823; reprinted by De Quincey in 1859 in vol. xii of his Collective Edition.—M.

and Jewish, in L——, weighed, moreover, in his own person, independently of that inheritance, one entire ton of gold.

Chapter II

The Ostensible Reason

The china-works would certainly never have been put off with this allegation; and therefore, by the advice of his attorney, he had in reserve a more special argument why he ought not to pay for the six-and-thirty busts. "My brother," said he, "may have ordered so many copies of his bust. It is possible. I neither affirm nor deny. Busts may be ordered, and my brother may have ordered them. But what then? I suppose all men will grant that he meant the busts to have some resemblance to himself, and by no means to have no resemblance. But now, be it known, they have no resemblance to him. *Ergo*, I refuse to take them. One word's as good as a thousand."

Chapter III

"In the second place"—Dinner is on the Table

But this one word, no, nor a thousand such, would satisfy Mr. Whelp, the proprietor of the china-works; so he summoned Mr. Goodchild before the magistracy. Unfortunately, Mr. Whelp's lawyer, in order to show his ingenuity, had filled sixteen folio pages with an introductory argument, in which he laboured to prove that the art of catching a likeness was an especial gift of God, bestowed on very few portrait-painters and sculptors—and which, therefore, it was almost impious and profane to demand of a mere uninspired baker of porcelain. From this argument he went on to infer *a fortiori*, in the second place, that where the china-baker *did* hit the likeness, and had done so much more than could lawfully be asked of him, it was an injustice that would cry aloud to heaven for redress, if, after all, his works were returned upon his hands; especially where, as in the present instance, so much beauty of art was united with the peculiar merit of a portrait. It was fatal, however, to the

effect of this argument that, just as the magistrate arrived at —"*In the second place*,"—his servant came in and said, "If you please, sir, dinner is on the table." Naturally, therefore, conceiving that the *gite* of the lawyer's reasoning was to defend the want of resemblance as an admitted fact, which it would be useless to deny, the worthy magistrate closed the pleadings, and gave sentence against Mr. Whelp, the plaintiff.

Chapter IV

The Professional Verdict

Mr. Whelp was confounded at this decree; and, as the readiest means of obtaining a revision of it, he sent in to the next sitting of the bench a copy of the bust, which had previously been omitted. As bad luck would have it, however, there happened on this occasion to be present an artist who had a rancorous enmity both to Mr. Whelp and to the modeller of the bust. This person, being asked his opinion, declared without scruple that the bust was as wretched a portrait as it was lamentable in its pretensions as a work of art, and that his youngest pupil would not have had the audacity to produce so infamous a performance, unless he had an express wish to be turned neck and heels out of his house.

Upon this award of the conscientious artist—out of regard to his professional judgment—the magistracy thought fit to impose silence upon their own senses, which returned a very opposite award: and thus it happened that the former decision was affirmed. Now, certainly, Mr. Whelp had his remedy: he might appeal from the magistrate's sentence. But this he declined. "No, no," said he, "I know what I'm about: I shall want the magistrate once more; and I mustn't offend him. I will appeal to public opinion: *that* shall decide between me and the old rogue of a merchant."

And precisely in this way it was brought about that the late stamp-distributor Goodchild came to stand exposed to the public view in the centre window of the china-manufactory.

Chapter V

The Sinecurist

At the corner of this china-manufactory a beggar had his daily station ; which, except for his youth, which was now and then thrown in his teeth, was indeed a right pleasant sinecure. To this man Mr. Whelp promised a handsome present if he would repeat to him in the evening what the passers-by had said of the bust in the day-time. Accordingly at night the beggar brought him the true and comfortable intelligence that young and old had unanimously pronounced the bust a most admirable likeness of the late stamp-distributor Goodchild. This report was regularly brought for eight days : on the eighth Mr. Whelp was satisfied, and paid off his commissioner, the beggar.

The next morning Mr. Whelp presented himself at Mr. Goodchild's to report the public approbation of his brother's bust.

Chapter VI

The Young Visionary

But here there was sad commotion. Mr. Goodchild was ill : and his illness arose from a little history, which must here be introduced by way of episode. Mr. Goodchild had an only daughter, named Ida. Now Miss Ida had begun, like other young ladies of her age, to think of marriage : nature had put it into her head to consider all at once that she was seventeen years of age. And it sometimes occurred to her that Mr. Tempest, the young barrister, who occupied the first floor over the way, was just the very man she would like in the character of lover. Thoughts of the same tendency appeared to have occurred also to Mr. Tempest. Ida seemed to him remarkably well fitted to play the part of a wife ; and, when he pretended to be reading the pandects at his window, too often (it must be acknowledged) his eyes were settled all the while upon Ida's blooming face. The glances of these eyes did certainly cause some derangement occasionally in Ida's sewing and netting. What if they did?

Let her drop as many stitches as she would, the next day was long enough to take them up again.

This young man, then, was clearly pointed out by Providence as the partner of her future life. Ah! that her father would think so too! But he called him always the young visionary. And, whenever she took a critical review of all their opposite neighbours, and fell as if by accident upon the domestic habits, respectable practice, and other favourable points about Mr Tempest, her father never failed to close the conversation by saying,—"Ay, but he's a mere young visionary." And, why, Mr. Goodchild? Simply for these two reasons: first, because once, at a party where they had met, Mr. Tempest had happened to say a few words very displeasing to his prejudices on the "golden age" of German poetry, to which Mr. Goodchild was much attached, and on which he could bear no opposition. Secondly, and chiefly, because, at the same time, he had unfortunately talked of the King of Hayti as a true crowned head,—a monarch whom Mr. Goodchild was determined never to acknowledge.

Chapter VII

At last, Ida and Mr. Tempest had come to form a regular correspondence together in the following way:—The young advocate had conducted a commerce of looks with the lovely girl for a long time; and, hardly knowing how it began, he had satisfied himself that she looked like an angel; and he grew very anxious to know whether she also talked like one? To ascertain this point, he followed her many a time, and up and down many a street; and he bore patiently, for her sake, all the angry looks of his clients, which seemed to say that he would do more wisely to stay at home and study their causes than to roam about in chase of a pretty girl. Mr. Tempest differed from his clients on this matter: suits at law, said he, have learned to wait; they are used to it; but hearts have not learned to wait, and never will be used to it. However, all was in vain. Ida was attended constantly either by her father or by an old governess; and in either case his scheme was knocked on the head.

At length, chance did for him more than he could ever do for himself, and placed him one night at her elbow in the theatre. True it was that her father, whose dislike to him ever since his fatal acknowledgment of the King of Hayti he had not failed to remark, sate on the other side of her; but the devil is in it, thought he, if I cannot steal a march on him the whole night through. As the overture to his scheme, therefore, he asked, in the most respectful manner, for the play-bill which Ida held in her hand. On returning it, he said,—what a pity that the vanity of the manager should disturb so many excellent parts; the part allotted to himself would have been far better played by several others in the company.

Mr. Tempest was not much delighted on observing that Mr. Goodchild did not receive this remark very propitiously, but looked still gloomier than before. The fact was that the manager constantly attended all Mr. Goodchild's literary parties, professed great deference for his opinions, and was in return pronounced by Mr. Goodchild a man of "exceedingly good taste and accurate judgment." His first shot, Mr. Tempest saw clearly, had missed fire; and he would have been very glad to have had it back again; for he was thrown into a hideous fright when he saw the deep darkness which was gathering on Mr. Goodchild's face. Meantime, it was some little support to him under his panic—that, in returning the play-bill to Ida, he had ventured to press her hand, and fancied (but it could only be fancy) that she slightly returned the pressure. His enemy, whose thunder now began to break, insisted on giving an importance to his remark which the unfortunate young man himself had never contemplated —having meant it only as an introduction to further conversation, and not at all valuing himself upon it. "A pity, my good sir," said Mr. Goodchild. "Why so, my good sir? On the contrary, my good sir, on the contrary, I believe it is pretty generally admitted that there is no part whatsoever in which this manager fails to outshine all competitors."

"Very true, sir; as you observe, sir, he outshines all his competitors; and, in fact, that was just the very remark I wished to make."

"It was, was it? Well, then, upon my word, my good sir, you took a very odd way to express it. The fact is, young and visionary people of this day are very rash in their judgments. But it is not to be supposed that so admirable a performer as this can be at all injured by such light and capricious opinions."

Mr. Tempest was confounded by this utter discomfiture of his inaugural effort, and sank dejected into silence. But his victorious foe looked abroad in all directions with a smiling and triumphant expression on his face, as if asking whether anybody had witnessed the ability with which he had taken down the conceit of the young rattlebrain.

However, Mr. Tempest was not so utterly dejected but he consoled himself with thinking that every dog has his day: his turn would come; and he might yet perhaps succeed in laying the old dragon asleep.

Chapter VIII

With a view to do this as soon as possible, at the end of the first act he begged a friend who stood next to him to take his place by the side of Ida for a few minutes, and then hastened out. Under one of the lamps on the outside of the theatre, he took out from his pocket the envelope of a letter he had lately received, and with a pencil wrote upon it a formal declaration of love. His project was to ask Ida a second time for the play-bill, and on returning it to crush up the little note and put both together into her hand. But lord! how the wisest schemes are baffled! On returning to the pit, he found the whole condition of things changed. His faithless representative met him with an apology at the very door. The fact was that, seeing a pretty young lady standing close by him, the devil of gallantry had led him to cede to her use in perpetuity what had been committed to his own care in trust only for a few minutes. Nor was this all; for, the lady being much admired and followed, and (like comets or Highland chieftains) having her "tail" on for this night, there was no possibility of reaching the neighbourhood of Ida for the pressure of the lady's tail of followers.

Chapter IX

In his whole life had Mr. Tempest never witnessed a more stupid performance, worse actors, or more disgusting people about him than during the time that he was separated from Ida. With the eye of an experienced tactician, he had calculated to a hair the course he must steer, on the termination of the play, to rejoin the object of his anxious regard. But alas! when the curtain dropped, he found his road quite blocked up. No remedy was left but to press right on, and without respect of persons. But he gained nothing by the indefatigable labour of his elbows except a great number of scowling looks. His attention was just called to this, when Ida, who had now reached the door, looked back for a moment, and then disappeared in company with her father. Two minutes after he had himself reached the door; but, looking round, he exclaimed pretty loudly—"Ah, good lord! it's of no use"; and then through the moonlight and the crowd of people he shot like an arrow, leaving them all to wonder what madness had seized the young advocate, who was usually so rational and composed. However, he overtook the object of his pursuit in the street in which he lived. For, upon his turning rapidly round the corner, Mr. Goodchild, alarmed at his noise and his speed, turned round upon him suddenly, and said—"Is this a man or a horse?"

Chapter X

"Mr. Goodchild," began the breathless barrister, "I am very much indebted to you."

"Hem!" said the other, in a way which seemed to express —"What now, my good sir?"

"You have this evening directed my attention to the eminent qualifications of our manager. Most assuredly you were in the right; he played the part divinely."

Here Mr. Tempest stopped to congratulate himself upon the triumphant expression which the moonlight revealed upon the face of his antagonist. On this triumph, if his plans succeeded, he meant to build a triumph of his own.

"Ay, ay: what, then, you've come to reason at last, my good sir?"

"Your judgment and penetration, Mr. Goodchild, I am bound at all times to bow to as far superior to my own."

During this compliment to the merchant's penetration, Mr. Tempest gently touched the hand of Ida with his pencil note: the hand opened, and, like an oyster, closed upon it in an instant. "In which scene, Mr. Tempest," said the merchant, "is it your opinion that the manager acquitted himself best?"

"In which scene!" Here was a delightful question. The advocate had attended so exclusively to Ida that whether there were any scenes at all in the whole performance was more than he could pretend to say; and now he was to endure a critical examination on the merits of each scene in particular. He was in direful perplexity. Considering, however, that in most plays there is some love, and therefore some love-scenes, he dashed at it, and boldly said—"In that scene, I think, where he makes the declaration of love.'

"Declaration of love! why, God bless my soul! in the whole part, from the beginning to end, there is nothing like a declaration of love."

"Oh, confound your accuracy, you old fiend!" thought Mr. Tempest to himself; but aloud he said—"No declaration of love, do you say? Is it possible? Why, then, I suppose I must have mistaken for the manager that man who played the lover: surely *he* played divinely."

"Divinely! divine stick! what, that wretched, stammering, wooden booby? Why, he would have been hissed off the stage, if it hadn't been well known that he was a stranger hired to walk through the part for that night."

Mr. Tempest, seeing that the more he said the deeper he plunged into the mud, held it advisable to be silent. On the other hand, Mr. Goodchild began to be ashamed of his triumph over what he had supposed the lawyer's prejudices. He took his leave, therefore, in these words: "Good-night, Mr. Tempest; and, for the future, my good sir, do not judge so precipitately as you did on that occasion when you complimented a black fellow with the title of king, and called St.

Domingo by the absurd name of Hayti. Some little consideration and discretion go to every sound opinion."

So saying, the old dragon walked off with his treasure, and left the advocate with his ears still tingling from his mortifications.

"Just to see the young people of this day," said Mr. Goodchild; "what presumption and what ignorance!" The whole evening through he continued to return to this theme, and during supper nearly choked himself in an ebullition of fiery zeal upon this favourite topic.

Chapter XI

The Letter-Box

To her father's everlasting question, "Am not I in the right, then?" Ida replied in a sort of pantomime, which was intended to represent "*Yes.*" This was her outward *yes*; but in her heart she was thinking of no other *yes* than that which she might one day be called on to pronounce at the altar by the side of Mr. Tempest. And therefore, at length, when the eternal question came round again, she nodded in a way which rather seemed to say, "Oh, dear sir, you are in the right for anything I have to say against it," than anything like a downright *yes*. On which Mr. Goodchild quitted one favourite theme for another more immediately necessary —viz. the lukewarmness of young people towards good counsel and sound doctrine.

Meantime, Ida's looks were unceasingly directed to her neck-handkerchief: the reason of which was this. In order, on the one hand, to have the love-letter as near as possible to her heart, and, on the other, to be assured that it was in safe custody, she had converted the beautiful white drapery of her bosom into a letter-case; and she felt continually urged to see whether the systole and diastole which went on in other important contents of this letter-case might not by chance expose it to view. The letter asked for an answer; and, late as it was, when all the house were in bed, Ida set about one. On the following morning, this answer was con-

veyed to its destination by the man who delivered the newspapers to her father and Mr. Tempest.

From this day forward there came so many letters to Miss Goodchild by the new-established post that the beautiful letter-case was no longer able to contain them. She was now obliged to resort to the help of her writing-desk ; which, so long as her father had no suspicions, was fully sufficient.

Chapter XII

The paper intercourse now began to appear too little to Mr. Tempest. For what can be despatched in a moment by word of mouth would often linger unaccomplished for a thousand years when conducted in writing. True it was that a great deal of important business had already been despatched by the letters. For instance, Mr. Tempest had through this channel assured himself that Ida was willing to be his for ever. Yet even this was not enough. The contract had been made, but not sealed upon the rosy lips of Ida.

This seemed monstrous to Mr. Tempest. "Grant me patience," said he to himself ; "grant me patience, when I think of the many disgusting old relations, great raw-boned, absurd fellows, with dusty snuff-powdered beards, that have revelled in that lip-paradise, hardly knowing—old withered wretches !—what they were about, or what a blessing was conferred upon them ; whilst I—yes, I, that am destined to call her my bride one of these days—am obliged to content myself with payments of mere paper money."

This seemed shocking ; and, indeed, considering the terms on which he now stood with Ida, Mr. Tempest could scarcely believe it himself. He paced up and down his study in anger, flinging glances at every turn upon the opposite house, which contained his treasure. All at once he stopped : "What's all this ?" said he, on observing Mr. Goodchild's servants lighting up the chandeliers in the great saloon. "What's in the wind now ?" And immediately he went to his writing-table for Ida's last letter ; for Ida sometimes communicated any little events in the family that

could anyways affect their correspondence ; on this occasion, however, she had given no hint of anything extraordinary approaching. Yet the preparations and the bustle indicated something *very* extraordinary. Mr. Tempest's heart began to beat violently. What was he to think? Great fêtes, in a house where there is an only daughter, usually have some reference to *her*. "Go, Tyrrel," said he to his clerk, "go and make inquiries (but cautiously, you understand, and in a lawyer-like manner) as to the nature and tendency of these arrangements." Tyrrel came back with the following report:—Mr. Goodchild had issued cards for a very great party on that evening; all the seniors were invited to tea, and almost all the young people of condition throughout the town to a masqued ball at night. The suddenness of the invitations, and the consequent hurry of the arrangements, arose in this way: a rich relative who lived in the country had formed a plan for coming by surprise, with his whole family, upon Mr. Goodchild. But Mr. Goodchild had accidentally received a hint of his intention by some side-wind, and had determined to turn the tables on his rich relation by surprising him with a masquerade.

"Oh, heavens! what barbarity!" said Mr. Tempest, as towards evening he saw from his windows young and old trooping to the fête. "What barbarity! There's hardly a scoundrel in the place but is asked; and I—I, John Tempest, that am to marry the jewel of the house,—must be content to witness the preparations and to hear the sound of their festivities from the solitude of my den."

Chapter XIII

Questions and Commands

As night drew on, more and more company continued to pour in. The windows being very bright, and the curtains not drawn, no motion of the party could escape our advocate. What pleased him better than all the splendour which he saw was the melancholy countenance of the kind-hearted girl as she stood at the centre window and looked over at him. This melancholy countenance, and these looks directed

at himself, were occasioned, as he soon became aware, by a proposal which had been made to play at questions and commands. This game, in fact, soon began. "Thunder and lightning!" said Mr. Tempest, discovering what it was, "is this to be endured?"

If the mere possibility of such an issue had alarmed him, how much more sensible was his affliction when he saw, as a matter of fact laid visibly before his bodily eyes, that every fool and coxcomb availed himself of the privilege of the game to give to Ida, his own destined bride, kisses[1] without let or hindrance; "whilst I," said he, "I, John Tempest, have never yet been blessed with one."

But if the *sight* of such liberties taken with his blooming Ida placed him on the brink of desperation, much more desperate did he become when that sight was shut out by that "consummate villain" (as he chose to style him) the footman, who at this moment took it into his head, or was ordered, to let down the curtains. Behind the curtains—ah! ye gods, what scenes might not pass!

"This must be put a stop to," said Mr. Tempest, taking his hat and cane, and walking into the street. Ay; but how? This was a question he could not answer. Wandering, therefore, up and down the streets until it had become quite dark, he returned at length to the point from which he had set out, and found that one nuisance at least—viz. the kissing—had ceased, and had given place to a concert. For Ida's musical talents and fine voice were well known, and she was generally called The Little Catalani. She was now singing, and a crowd of persons had collected under the window to hear her, who seemed, by their looks, to curse every passer-by for the disturbance he made.

Mr. Tempest crept on tiptoe to join the crowd of listeners, and was enraptured by the sweet tones of Ida's voice. After the conclusion of the air, and when the usual hubbub of enchanting! divine! &c., had rung out its peal, the bystanders outside began to talk of the masquerade. In the crowd were some of those who had been invited; and one

[1] The reader must remember that the scene is laid in Germany. This, and other instances of *grossièrete*, have been purposely retained, in illustration of German manners.

amongst them was flattering himself that nobody would recognise him before he should unmasque.

Chapter XIV

The Death's Head Masque

Thus much information Mr. Tempest drew from this casual conversation, that he found it would not be required of the masquers to announce their names to any person on their arrival. Upon this hint he grounded a plan for taking a part in the masqued ball. By good luck he was already provided with a black domino against the winter masquerades at the public rooms; this domino was so contrived that the head of the wearer was hidden under the cloak, in which an imperceptible opening was made for the eyes; the real head thus became a pair of shoulders, and upon this was placed a false head, which, when lifted up, exposed a white skull with eyeless sockets, and grinning, with a set of brilliantly white teeth, at the curious spectator.

Having settled his scheme, Mr. Tempest withdrew to his own lodgings, in order to make preparations for its execution.

Chapter XV

It's only I

The company at Mr. Goodchild's consisted of two divisions. No. 1, embracing the elder or more fashionable persons, and those who were nearly connected with the family, had been invited to tea, supper, and a masqued ball; No. 2, the younger and less distinguished persons, had been invited to the ball only. This arrangement, which proceeded from the penurious disposition of Mr. Goodchild, had on this occasion the hearty approbation of Mr. Tempest. About eleven o'clock, therefore, when a great part of the guests in the second division had already arrived, he ordered a sedan-chair to be fetched; and then, causing himself to be carried up and down through several streets, that nobody might discover from what house the gigantic domino had issued, he repaired to the house of Mr. Goodchild.

His extraordinary stature excited so much the more astonishment amongst the party-coloured mob of masquers, because he kept himself wholly aloof from all the rest, and paced up and down with haughty strides. His demeanour and air had in it something terrific to everybody except to Ida, to whom he had whispered as he passed her alone in an ante-room—"Don't be alarmed; it's only I"; at the same time giving her a billet, in which he requested a few moments' conversation with her at any time in the course of the evening.

Some persons, however, had observed him speaking to Ida; and therefore, on her return to the great saloon, she was pressed on all sides to tell what she knew of the mysterious giant. She, good heavens! how should she know anything of him? "What had he said, then?" *That*, too, she could as little answer. He spoke, she said, in such a low, hollow, and unintelligible tone that she was quite alarmed, and heard nothing of what he uttered.

The company now betrayed more and more anxiety in reference to the unknown masque, so that Ida had no chance for answering his billet, or granting the request which it contained. Mr. Tempest now began to regret much that he had not selected an ordinary masque, in which he might have conversed at his ease, without being so remarkably pointed out to the public attention.

Chapter XVI

Suspicions

The murmurs about the tall domino grew louder and louder, and gathered more and more about him. He began to hear doubts plainly expressed whether he was actually invited. The master of the house protested that, so far from having any such giant amongst his acquaintance, he had never seen such a giant except in show-booths. This mention of booths gave a very unfortunate direction to the suspicions already abroad against the poor advocate; for at that time there was a giant in the town who was exhibiting himself for money, and Mr. Goodchild began to surmise that this man,

either with a view to increasing his knowledge of men and manners, or for his recreation after the tedium of standing to be gazed at through a whole day's length, had possibly smuggled himself as a contraband article into his masqued ball.

Chapter XVII

Difficulties increased

The worthy host set to work very deliberately to count his guests, and it turned out that there was actually just one masque more than there should be. Upon this he stepped into the middle of the company and spoke as follows :— "Most respectable and respected masques, under existing circumstances, and for certain weighty causes me thereto moving (this phrase Mr. Goodchild had borrowed from his lawyer), I have to request that you will all and several, one after another, communicate your names to me, by whispering them into my ear."

Well did Mr. Tempest perceive what were the existing circumstances, and what the reasons thereto moving, which had led to this measure ; and very gladly he would have withdrawn himself from this vexatious examination by marching off ; but it did not escape him that a couple of sentinels were already posted at the door.

Chapter XVIII

Panic

More than one-half of the guests had already communicated their names to Mr. Goodchild, and stood waiting in the utmost impatience for the examination of the giant. But the giant, on his part, was so little eager to gratify them by pressing before others that at length, when all the rest had gone through their probation honourably, he remained the last man, and thus was, *ipso facto*, condemned as the supernumerary man before his trial commenced.

The company was now divided into two great classes— those who had a marriage garment, and the unfortunate giant

who had none. So much was clear; but, to make further discoveries, the host now stepped up to him hastily and said —"Your name, if you please?"

The masque stood as mute, as tall, and as immovable as the gable end of a house. "Your name?" repeated Mr. Goodchild; "I'll trouble you for your name?" No answer coming, a cold shivering seized upon Mr. Goodchild. In fact, at this moment a story came across him from his childish years, that, when Dr. Faustus was played, it had sometimes happened that amongst the stage devils there was suddenly observed to be one too many, and the supernumerary one was found to be no spurious devil, but a true, sound, and legitimate devil.

For the third time, while his teeth chattered, he said— "Your name, if you please?"

"I have none," said Mr. Tempest, in so hollow a voice that the heart of the worthy merchant sank down in a moment to his knee-buckles, and an ice-wind of panic began to blow pretty freshly through the whole company.

"Your face, then, if you please, sir?" stammered out Mr. Goodchild.

Very slowly and unwillingly the masque, being thus importunately besieged, proceeded to comply; but scarcely had he unmasqued and exposed the death's head, when every soul ran out of the room with an outcry of horror.

The masque sprang after them, bounding like a greyhound, and his grinning skull nodding as he moved. This he did under pretence of pursuing them, but in fact to take advantage of the general panic for making his exit.

Chapter XIX

The Parting Kiss—Miss Goodchild in the arms of Death

In an ante-room, now totally deserted, Death was met by Ida, who said to him—"Ah! for God's sake make your escape. Oh! if you did but know what anxiety I have suffered on account of your strange conceit." Here she paused, and spite of her anxiety she could not forbear smiling at the thought of the sudden *coup-de-théâtre* by which

Mr. Tempest had turned the tables upon every soul that had previously been enjoying his panic. In the twinkling of an eye he had inflicted a far deeper panic upon them, and she had herself been passed by the whole herd of fugitives—tall and short, corpulent and lanky, halt and lame, young and old—all spinning away with equal energy before the face of the supernumerary guest.

Death, in return, told Ida how he had been an eye-witness to the game of questions and commands, and to the letting down of the curtains. This spectacle (he acknowledged) had so tortured him that he could stand it no longer, and he had sworn within himself that he would have a kiss as well as other persons; and further, that he would go and fetch it himself from the midst of the masquerade, though not expecting to have been detected as the extra passenger or nip.[1] And surely, when a whole company had tasted the ambrosia of her lips, Miss Goodchild would not be so unkind as to dismiss him alone without that happiness.

No, Miss Goodchild was not so unkind; and Death was just in the act of applying his lips to the rosy mouth of Ida, when old Goodchild came peeping in at the door to see if the coast was clear of the dreadful masque, and behind him was a train of guests, all stepping gently and on tiptoe from an adjoining corridor.

Every soul was petrified with astonishment on seeing the young, warm-breathing Ida on such close and apparently friendly terms with the black gigantic Death, whose skull was grinning just right above the youthful pair, and surmounting them like a crest. At this sight all became plain, and the courage of the company, which had so recently sunk below the freezing point, suddenly rose at once above boiling heat. Mr. Goodchild levelled a blow at the Death's head which had caused him so much pain and agitation; and Mr. Tempest, seeing that no better course remained, made off for the front door; and thus the uninvited masque, who had so lately chased and ejected the whole body of the invited ones, was in turn chased and ejected by them.

[1] In England, passengers who are taken up on stage coaches by the collusion of the guard and coachman, without the knowledge of the proprietors, are called *nips*.

The festivities had been too violently interrupted to be now resumed; the guests took leave; and the weeping Ida was banished to a close confinement in her own room.

Chapter XX

Here ends our episode. It was on the very morning after this *fracas* that Mr. Whelp waited upon Mr. Goodchild, to report to him the universal opinion of the world upon the bust of the late stamp-distributor, his brother; and upon that opinion to ground an appeal to his justice.

A worse season for his visit he could not possibly have chosen. Mr. Goodchild stormed, and said,—"The case had been tried and disposed of; and he must insist on being troubled with no further explanations." And so far did his anger make him forget the common courtesies of life that he never asked the proprietor of the china-works to sit down. Mr. Whelp, on his part, no less astonished and irritated at such treatment, inquired at the footman what was the matter with his master; and the footman, who was going away, and was reckless of consequences, repeated the whole history of the preceding night with fits of laughter; and added that the sport was not yet over, for that this morning a brisk correspondence had commenced between his master and Mr. Tempest—which, by the effect produced on the manners of both, seemed by no means of the gentlest nature.

Chapter XXI

The King of Hayti

This account was particularly agreeable to Mr. Whelp. Concluding that, under the present circumstances, Mr. Tempest would naturally be an excellent counsellor against Mr. Goodchild, he hastened over to his apartments, and said that, his last effort to bring the merchant over the way to any reasonable temper of mind having utterly failed, he had now another scheme. But first of all he wished to have the professional opinion of Mr. Tempest whether he should lay

himself open to an action if he took the following course to reimburse himself the expenses of the three dozen of busts:—He had been told by some Englishman, whose name he could not at this moment call to mind, that the bust of the stamp-master was a most striking likeness of Christophe, the black King of Hayti: now, this being the case, what he proposed to do was to wash over the late stamp-distributor with a black varnish, and to export one dozen and a half of the distributor on speculation to St. Domingo, keeping the rest for home consumption.

When Mr. Tempest heard this plan stated, in spite of his own disturbance of mind at the adventures of the last night, he could not forbear laughing heartily at the conceit; for he well knew what was the real scheme which lurked under this pretended exportation to St. Domingo. Some little time back, Mr. Goodchild had addressed to the German people, through the *General Advertiser*, this question:—"How or whence it came about that, in so many newspapers of late days, mention had been made of a kingdom of Hayti, when it was notorious to everybody that the island in question was properly called St. Domingo?" He therefore exhorted all editors of political journals to return to more correct principles. On the same occasion he had allowed himself many very disrespectful expressions against "a certain black fellow who pretended to be King of Hayti"; so that it might readily be judged that it would not be a matter of indifference to him if his late brother the stamp-master were sold under the name of King of Hayti.

The barrister's opinion was that, as the heir of the bespeaker had solemnly deposed to the non-resemblance of the busts, and had on this ground found means to liberate himself from all obligation to take them or to pay for them, those busts had reverted in full property to the china-works. However, he advised Mr. Whelp to blacken only one of them for the present, to place it in the same window where one had stood before, and then to await the issue.

Chapter XXII

A week after this, the bust of the stamp-distributor, with the hair and face blackened, was placed in the window ; and below it was written, in gilt letters, "*His Most Excellent Majesty, the King of Hayti.*"

This manœuvre operated with the very best effect. The passers-by all remembered to have seen the very same face a short time ago as the face of a white man ; and they all remembered to whom the face belonged. The laughing, therefore, never ceased from morning to night before the window of the china-works.

Now, Mr. Goodchild received very early intelligence of what was going on, possibly through some persons specially commissioned by Mr. Whelp to trouble him with the news ; and straightway he trotted off to the china-works,—not, to be sure, with any view of joining the laughers, but, on the contrary, to attack Mr. Whelp, and to demand the destruction of the bust. However, all his remonstrances were to no purpose ; and the more anger he betrayed, so much the more did it encourage his antagonist.

Mr. Goodchild hurried home in a great passion, and wrote a note to the borough-reeve, with a pressing request that he would favour him with his company to supper that evening, to taste some genuine bottled London porter.

This visit, however, did not lead to those happy results which Mr. Goodchild had anticipated. True it was that he showed his discretion in not beginning to speak of the busts until the bottled porter had produced its legitimate effects upon the spirits of the borough-reeve : the worshipful man was in a considerable state of elevation ; but for all *that* he would not predict any favourable issue to the action against Mr. Whelp which his host was meditating. He shrugged his shoulders, and said that, on the former occasion when Mr. Goodchild had urged the bench to pronounce for the *non-resemblance* of the busts, they had gone further, in order to gratify him, than they could altogether answer to their consciences ; but, really, to come now and call upon the same

bench to pronounce for the *resemblance* of the same identical busts was altogether inadmissible.

Chapter XXIII

Mr Goodchild was on the brink of despair the whole night through; and, when he rose in the morning and put his head out of the window to inhale a little fresh air, what should be the very first thing that met him but a poisonous and mephitic blast from the window of his opposite neighbour, which in like manner stood wide open: for his sharp sight easily detected that the young barrister, his enemy, instead of the gypsum bust of Ulpian which had hitherto presided over his library, had mounted the black china bust of the King of Hayti.

Without a moment's delay Mr. Goodchild jumped into his clothes and hastened down to Mr. Whelp. His two principles of vitality, avarice and ambition, had struggled together throughout the night; but, on the sight of his brother the stamp-master, thus posthumously varnished with lamp-black, and occupying so conspicuous a station in the library of his mortal enemy, ambition had gained a complete victory. He bought up, therefore, the whole thirty-five busts; and, understanding that the only black copy was in the possession of Mr. Tempest, he begged that, upon some pretext or other, Mr. Whelp would get it back into his hands, promising to pay all expenses out of his own purse.

Mr. Whelp shook his head; but promised to try what he could do, and went over without delay to the advocate's rooms. Meantime, the longer he stayed and made it evident that the negotiation had met with obstacles, so much the larger were the drops of perspiration which stood upon Mr. Goodchild's forehead, as he paced up and down his room in torment.

At last Mr. Whelp came over, but with bad news; Mr. Tempest was resolute to part with the bust at no price.

Chapter XXIV

Dictation

Mr. Goodchild, on hearing this intelligence, hastened to his daughter, who was still under close confinement, and, taking her hand, said,—"Thoughtless girl, come and behold!" Then, conducting her to his own room, and pointing with his finger to Mr. Tempest's book-case, he said,—"See there! behold my poor deceased brother, the stamp-distributor! to what a situation is he reduced—that, after death, he must play the part of a black fellow, styling himself King of Hayti! And is it with such a man, one who aims such deadly stabs at the honour and peace of our family, that you would form a clandestine connexion? I blush for you, inconsiderate child. However, sit down to my writing-desk, and this moment write what I shall dictate, *verbatim et literatim*; and in that case I shall again consider and treat you as my obedient daughter. Ida seated herself: her father laid a sheet of paper before her, put a pen into her hand, and dictated the following epistle, in which he flattered himself that he had succeeded to a marvel in counterfeiting the natural style of a young lady of seventeen:—

"Respectable and friendly Sir,—Since the unfortunate masquerade, I have not had one hour of peace. My excellent and most judicious father has shut me up in my own apartments; and, according to special information which I have had, it is within the limits of possibility that my confinement may last for a year and a day. Now, therefore, whereas credible intelligence has reached me that you have, by purchase from the china-manufactory of the city, possessed yourself of a bust claiming to be the representation of a black fellow, who (most absurdly!) styles himself King of Hayti; and whereas, from certain weighty reasons him thereunto moving, my father has a desire to sequestrate into his own hands any bust or busts purporting to represent the said black fellow; and whereas, further, my father has caused it to be notified to me that immediately upon the receipt of the said bust through any honourable application of mine to

you, he will release me from arrest: therefore, and on the aforesaid considerations, I, Ida Goodchild, spinster, do hereby make known my request to you, that, as a testimony of those friendly dispositions which you have expressed, or caused to be expressed, to me, you would, on duly weighing the premises, make over to me the bust aforesaid in consideration of certain monies (as shall be hereafter settled) to be by me paid over unto you. Which request being granted and ratified, I shall, with all proper respect, acknowledge myself your servant and well-wisher, IDA GOODCHILD,

"*manu propria.*"

The two last words the poor child knew not how to write, and therefore her father wrote them for her, and said—"The meaning of these words is that the letter was written with your own hand; upon which, in law, a great deal depends." He then folded up the letter, sealed it, and rang for a servant to carry it over to Mr. Tempest. "But not from me, do you hear, William! Don't say it comes from me: and, if Mr. Tempest should cross-examine you, be sure you say I know nothing of it."

CHAPTER XXV

Candour

"For the rest," said Mr. Goodchild, "never conceit that I shall lend any the more countenance, for all this, to your connexion with the young visionary. As soon as the bust is once in my hands, from that moment he and I are strangers, and shall know each other no more."

Mr. Goodchild had not for a long time been in such spirits as he was after this most refined *tour d'addresse* in diplomacy (as he justly conceived it). "The style," said he, "cannot betray the secret: no, I flatter myself that I have hit *that* to a hair; I defy any critic, the keenest, to distinguish it from the genuine light sentimental *billet-doux* style of young ladies of seventeen. How should he learn, then? William dares not tell him for his life. And the fellow can never be such a brute as to refuse the bust to a young lady whom he pre-

tends to admire. Lord! it makes me laugh to think what a long face he'll show when he asks for permission to visit you upon the strength of this sacrifice, and I, looking at him like a bull, shall say, "No, indeed, my good sir; as to the bust, what's that to me, my good sir? What do I care for the bust, my good sir? I believe it's all broken to pieces with a sledge-hammer, or else you might have it back again for anything I care. Eh, Ida, my girl, won't that be droll? Won't it be laughable to see what a long face he'll cut?" But, but——

Chapter XXVI

Won't it be laughable to see what a long face the fellow will cut?

If Ida had any particular wish to see *how* laughable a fellow looked under such circumstances, she had very soon that gratification; for her father's under jaw dropped enormously on the return of the messenger. It did not perhaps require any great critical penetration to determine from what member of the family the letter proceeded; and, independently of *that*, Mr. Tempest had (as the reader knows) some little acquaintance with the epistolary style of Miss Goodchild. In his answer, therefore, he declined complying with the request; but, to convince his beloved Ida that his refusal was designed not for her, but for her father, he expressed himself as follows:—

"Madam, my truly respectable young friend,—It gives me great concern to be under the painful necessity of stating that it is wholly out of my power to make over unto you the bust of his gracious majesty the King of Hayti, 'in consideration' (as you express it) 'of certain monies to be by you paid over unto me.' This, I repeat, is wholly impossible: seeing that I am now on the point of ratifying a treaty with an artist, in virtue of which three thousand copies are to be forthwith taken of the said bust on account of its distinguished excellence, and to be dispersed to my friends and others throughout Europe. With the greatest esteem, I remain your most obedient and devoted servant, John Tempest."

Chapter XXVII

Unexpected Denouement

"Now, then," thought Mr. Goodchild, "the world is come to a pretty pass." The honour and credit of his name and family seemed to stand on the edge of a razor; and, without staying for any further consideration, he shot over, like an arrow, to Mr. Tempest.

Scarcely was he out of the house when in rushed the postman with a second note to Miss Goodchild, apologising for the former, and explaining to her the particular purpose he had in writing it.

How well he succeeded in this was very soon made evident by the circumstance of her father's coming back with him, arm-in-arm. Mr. Tempest had so handsomely apologised for any offence he might have given, and with a tone of real feeling had rested his defence so entirely upon the excess of his admiration for Miss Goodchild, which had left him no longer master of his own actions or understanding, that her father felt touched and flattered—forgave everything frankly—and allowed him to hope, from his daughter's mouth, for the final ratification of his hopes.

"But this one stipulation I must make, my good sir," said Mr. Goodchild, returning to his political anxieties, "that in future you must wholly renounce that black fellow, who styles himself (most absurdly!) the King of Hayti." "With all my heart," said Mr. Tempest: "Miss Goodchild will be cheaply purchased by renouncing *The King of Hayti*."

THE INCOGNITO; OR, COUNT FITZ-HUM[1]

[THE following Tale is translated from the German of Dr. Schulz, a living author of great popularity,[2] not known at all under that name, but under the *nom-de-plume* of Friedrich Laun. A judicious selection (well translated) from the immense body of his tales and *schwätze* would have a triple claim on public attention: *first*, as reflecting in a lively way the general aspect of German domestic life among the middle ranks; *secondly*, as pretty faithful reflexes of German tastes and propensities amongst the most *numerous* class of readers, —no writer, except Kotzebue, having dedicated his exertions with more success to the one paramount purpose of meeting the popular taste, and adapting himself to the immediate demands of the market; *thirdly*, as possessing considerable intrinsic merit in the lighter department of comic tales. On this point, and effectually to guard the reader against disappointment from seeking for more than was ever designed, I will say all that needs to be said in a single brief sentence. The tales of Dr. Schulz have exactly that merit, and pretend to that merit, neither more nor less, which we look for in a clever one-act dramatic after-piece: viz. the very slightest basis of incident; a few grotesque or laughable situations; a playful style; and an airy, *sketchy* mode of catching such

[1] From *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, No. V (1824); reprinted by De Quincey in 1859 in vol. xi of his Collective Edition.—M.

[2] "*Living*":—He certainly *was* living when I wrote this little passage. But it may make all the difference in the world to the doctor, as also to the doctor's creditors, that the entire notice (consequently that particular word *living*) was written by me in the year 1823. [This note was added in 1859. See Editor's Preface, p. 3 and p. 4.—M.]

fugitive revelations, in manners or in character, as are best suited to a comic treatment. The unelaborate narratives of Laun are mines of what is called *Fun*; which in its way, even when German fun, is no bad thing. To apply any more elaborate criticism to them would be "to break a fly upon the wheel."]

The Town-Council were sitting, and in gloomy silence; alternately they looked at each other, and at the official order (that morning received) which reduced their perquisites and salaries by one-half. At length the chief burgomaster arose, turned the mace-bearer out of the room, and bolted the door. That worthy man, however, or (as he was more frequently styled) that worthy mace, was not so to be baffled: old experience in acoustics had taught him where to apply his ear with most advantage in cases of the present emergency; and, as the debate soon rose from a humming of gentle dissent to the stormy pitch of downright quarrelling, he found no difficulty in assuaging the pangs of his curiosity. The council, he soon learned, were divided as to the course to be pursued on their common calamity,—whether formally to remonstrate or not, at the risk of losing their places; indeed they were divided on every point except one; and *that* was, contempt for the political talents of the new prince, who could begin his administration upon a principle so monstrous as that of retrenchment.

At length, in one of the momentary pauses of the hurricane, the council distinguished the sound of two vigorous fists playing with the utmost energy upon the panels of the door outside. What presumption is this? exclaimed the chairman, immediately leaping up. However, on opening the door, it appeared that the fury of the summons was dictated by no failure in respect, but by absolute necessity: necessity has no law; and any more reverential knocking could have had no chance of being audible. The person outside was Mr. Commissioner Pig; and his business was to communicate a despatch of urgent importance which he had that moment received by express.

"First of all, gentlemen," said the pursy commissioner, "allow me to take breath": and, seating himself, he began

to wipe his forehead. Agitated with the fear of some unhappy codicil to the unhappy testament already received, the members gazed anxiously at the open letter which he held in his hand; and the chairman, unable to control his impatience, made a grab at it: "Permit me, Mr. Pig." "No!" said Pig; "it is the postscript only which concerns the council: wait one moment, and I will have the honour of reading it myself." Thereupon he drew out his spectacles; and, adjusting them with provoking coolness, slowly and methodically proceeded to read as follows:—"We open our letter to acquaint you with a piece of news which has just come to our knowledge, and which it will be important for your town to learn as soon as possible. His Serene Highness has resolved on visiting the remoter provinces of his new dominions immediately: he means to preserve the strictest *incognito*, and, we understand, will travel under the name of Count Fitz-Hum, attended only by one gentleman of the bed-chamber, viz. the Baron Von Hoax. The carriage he will use on this occasion is a plain English landau, the body painted dark blue, 'picked out' with tawny and white; and, for his Highness in particular, you will easily distinguish him by his superb whiskers. Of course we need scarcely suggest to you that, if the principal hotel of your town should not be in *comme-il-faut* order, or for any reason not fully and unconditionally available, it will be proper in that case to meet the illustrious traveller on his entrance with an offer of better accommodations in one of the best private mansions; amongst which your own, Herr Pig, is reputed to stand foremost. Your town is to have the honour of the new sovereign's first visit; and on this account you will be much envied, and the eyes of all Germany turned upon you."

"Doubtless; most important intelligence!" said the chairman: "but who is your correspondent?"

"The old and eminent house of Wassermüller; and I thought it my duty to communicate the information without delay."

"To be sure, to be sure; and the council is under the greatest obligation to you for the service."

So said all the rest; for they all viewed in the light of a providential interference on behalf of the old traditional

fees, perquisites, and salaries, this opportunity so unexpectedly thrown in their way of winning the prince's favour. To make the best use of such an opportunity, it was absolutely necessary that their hospitalities should be on the most liberal scale. On that account, it was highly gratifying to the council that Commissioner Pig loyally volunteered the loan of his house. Some drawback, undoubtedly, it was on this pleasure that Commissioner Pig in his next sentence made known that he must be paid for his loyalty. However, there was no remedy; and his demands were acceded to. For not only was Pig-house the only mansion in the town at all suitable for the occasion; but it was also known to be so in the prince's capital, as clearly appeared from the letter which had just been read; at least when read by Pig himself.

All being thus arranged, and the council on the point of breaking up, a sudden cry of "treason!" was raised by a member; and the mace-bearer was detected skulking behind an arm-chair, perfidiously drinking in the secrets of the state. He was instantly dragged out, the enormity of his crime displayed to him (which under many wise governments, the chairman assured him, would have been punished with the bowstring or instant impalement); and, after being amerced in a considerable fine, which paid the first instalment of the Piggian demand, he was bound over to inviolable secrecy by an oath of great solemnity. This oath, at the suggestion of a member, was afterwards administered to the whole of the senate in rotation, as also to the Commissioner; which done, the council adjourned.

"Now, my dear creatures," said the Commissioner to his wife and daughter on returning home, "without a moment's delay send for the painter, the upholsterer, the cabinet-maker, also for the butcher, the fishmonger, the poulterer, the confectioner; in one half-hour let each and all be at work; and at work let them continue all day and all night."

"At work! but what for? what for, Pig?"

"And, do you hear, as quickly as possible," added Pig, driving them both out of the room.

"But what for?" they both repeated, re-entering at another door.

Without vouchsafing any answer, however, the Commis-

sioner went on: "And let the tailor, the shoemaker, the milliner, the——"

"The fiddle-stick end, Mr. Pig. I insist upon knowing what all this is about."

"No matter what, my darling. *Sic volo, sic jubeo; stet pro ratione voluntas.*"

"Hark you, Mr. Commissioner. Matters are at length come to a crisis. You have the audacity to pretend to keep a secret from your lawful wife. Hear then my fixed determination. At this moment there is a haunch of venison roasting for dinner. The cook is so ignorant that, without my directions, this haunch will be scorched to a cinder. Now I swear that, unless you instantly reveal to me this secret without any reservation whatever, I will resign the venison to its fate. I will, by all that is sacred."

The venison could not be exposed to a more fiery trial than was Mr. Commissioner Pig; the venison, when alive and hunted, could not have perspired more profusely, nor trembled in more anguish. But there was no alternative. His "morals" gave way before his "passions"; and, after binding his wife and daughter by the general oath of secrecy, he communicated the state mystery. By the same or similar methods so many other wives assailed the virtue of their husbands that in a few hours the limited scheme of secrecy adopted by the council was realized on the most extensive scale; for before nightfall not merely a few members of the council, but every man, woman, and child in the place, had been solemnly bound over to inviolable secrecy.

Meantime some members of the council, who had an unhappy leaning to infidelity, began to suggest doubts on the authenticity of the Commissioner's news. Of old time he had been celebrated for the prodigious quantity of secret intelligence which his letters communicated, but not equally for its quality. Too often it stood in unhappy contradiction to the official news of the public journals. But still, on such occasions, the Commissioner would exclaim: What then? Who would believe what newspapers say? No man of sense believes a word the newspapers say. Agreeably to which hypothesis, upon various cases of obstinate discord between his letters and the gazettes of Europe, some of

which went the length of point-blank contradiction, unceremoniously giving the lie to each other, he persisted in siding with the former: peremptorily refusing to be talked into a belief of certain events which the rest of Europe have long ago persuaded themselves to think matter of history. The battle of Leipsic, for instance, he treats to this hour as a mere idle chimera of visionary politicians.[1] Pure hypochondriacal fiction! says he. No such affair ever could have occurred, as you may convince yourself by looking at my private letters: they make no allusion to any transaction of that sort, as you will see at once; none whatever. Such being the character of the Commissioner's private correspondence, several councilmen were disposed, on reflection, to treat his recent communication as very questionable and apocryphal, amongst whom was the chairman or chief burgomaster; and the next day he walked over to Pig-house for the purpose of expressing his doubts. The Commissioner was so much offended that the other found it advisable to apologize with some energy. "I protest to you," said he, "that as a private individual I am fully satisfied; it is only in my public capacity that I took the liberty of doubting. The truth is, our town-chest is miserably poor, and we would not wish to go to the expense of a new covering for the council table upon a false alarm. Upon my honour, it was solely upon patriotic grounds that I sided with the sceptics." The Commissioner scarcely gave himself the trouble of accepting his apologies. And indeed at this moment the burgomaster had reason himself to feel ashamed of his absurd scruples; for in rushed a breathless messenger to announce that the blue landau and the "superb whiskers" had just passed through the north gate. Yes; Fitz-Hum and Von Hoax were positively here; not coming, but come; and the profanest sceptic could no

[1] This seeming extravagance might have pleaded its own counterpart in Liverpool. Mr. Koster, a gold-merchant in that great town, never to his dying day would hear of any pretended battle at Talavera in the year 1809. Through Southey's introduction I myself formed his acquaintance; and, though I found him (as the reader will suppose) by intermitting fits crotchety and splenetically eccentric, no man could refuse his deference to Mr. Koster's intellectual pretensions. I may add that he was pre-eminently hospitable, and full of friendly services. But, as to Talavera, really you must excuse him!

longer presume to doubt. For, whilst the messenger yet spoke, the wheels of Fitz-Hum's landau began to hum along the street. The chief burgomaster fled in affright; and with him fled the shades of infidelity.

This was a triumph, a providential *coup-de-théâtre*, on the side of the true believers: the orthodoxy of the Piggian *Commercium Epistolicum* was now for ever established. Nevertheless, even in this great moment of his existence, Pig felt that he was not happy, not perfectly happy; something was still left to desire; something which reminded him that he was mortal. "Oh! why," said he, "why, when such a *cornucopia* of blessings is showered upon me, why would destiny will that it must come one day too soon? before the Brussels carpet was laid down in the breakfast-room, before the——." At this instant the carriage suddenly rolled up to the door: a dead stop followed, which put a dead stop to Pig's soliloquy; the steps were audibly let down; and the Commissioner was obliged to rush out precipitately in order to do the honours of reception to his illustrious guest.

"No ceremony, I beg," said the Count Fitz-Hum: "for one day at least let no idle forms remind me of courts, or banish the happy thought that I am in the bosom of friends!" So saying, he stretched out his hand to the Commissioner; and, though he did not shake Pig's hand, yet (as great men do) he pressed it with the air of one who has feelings too fervent and profound for utterance; whilst Pig, on his part, sank upon one knee, and imprinted a grateful kiss upon that princely hand which had by its condescension for ever glorified his own.

Von Hoax was no less gracious than the Count Fitz-Hum, and was pleased repeatedly, both by words and gestures, to signify that he dispensed with all ceremony and idle consideration of rank.

The Commissioner was beginning to apologize for the unfinished state of the preparations, but the Count would not hear of it. "Affection to my person," said he, "unseasonable affection, I must say it, has (it seems) betrayed my rank to you; but for this night at least, I beseech you, let us forget it." And, upon the ladies excusing themselves from appearing, on the plea that those dresses were not yet

arrived in which they could think of presenting themselves before their sovereign,—"Ah! what?" said the Count, gaily; "my dear Commissioner, I cannot think of accepting such excuses as these." Agitated as the ladies were at this summons, they found all their alarms put to flight in a moment by the affability and gracious manners of the high personage. Nothing came amiss to him: everything was right and delightful. Down went the little sofa-bed in a closet which they had found it necessary to make up for one night, the state-bed not being ready until the following day; and, with the perfect high-breeding of a prince, he saw in the least mature of the arrangements for his reception, and the least successful of the attempts to entertain him, nothing but the good intention and loyal affection which had suggested them.

The first great question which arose was—At what hour would the Count Fitz-Hum be pleased to take supper? But this question the Count Fitz-Hum referred wholly to the two ladies; and for this one night he notified his pleasure that no other company should be invited. Precisely at eleven o'clock the party sat down to supper, which was served on the round table in the library. The Count Fitz-Hum, we have the pleasure of stating, was in the best health and spirits; and, on taking his seat, he smiled with the most paternal air—at the same time bowing to the ladies who sat on his right and left hand, and saying,—"Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?" At which words tears began to trickle down the cheeks of the Commissioner, overwhelmed with the sense of the honour and happiness which were thus descending *pleno imbre* upon his family; and finding nothing left to wish for but that the whole city had been witness to his felicity. Even the cook came in for some distant rays and emanations of the princely countenance; for the Count Fitz-Hum condescended to express his entire approbation of the supper, and signified his pleasure to Von Hoax that the cook should be remembered on the next vacancy which occurred in the palace establishment.

"Tears such as tender fathers shed" had already on this night bedewed the cheeks of the Commissioner; but, before he retired to bed, he was destined to shed more and still sweeter tears; for after supper he was honoured by a long

private interview with the Count, in which that personage expressed his astonishment (indeed, he must say his indignation) that merit so distinguished as that of Mr. Pig should so long have remained unknown at court. "I now see more than ever," said he, "the necessity there was that I should visit my states incognito." And he then threw out pretty plain intimations that a place, and even a title, would soon be conferred on his host.

Upon this Pig wept copiously: and, upon retiring, being immediately honoured by an interview with Mr. Von Hoax, who assured him that he was much mistaken if he thought that his Highness ever did these things by halves, or would cease to watch over the fortunes of a family whom he had once taken into his special grace, the good man absolutely sobbed like a child, and could neither utter a word nor get a wink of sleep that night.

All night the workmen pursued their labours, and by morning the state apartments were in complete preparation. By this time it was universally known throughout the city *who* was sleeping at the Commissioner's. As soon, therefore, as it could be supposed agreeable to him, the trained bands of the town marched down to pay their respects by a morning salute. The drums awoke the Count, who rose immediately, and in a few minutes presented himself at the window, bowing repeatedly and in the most gracious manner. A prodigious roar of "*Vivat Serenissimus!*" ascended from the mob; amongst whom the Count had some difficulty in descrying the martial body who were parading below; that gallant corps mustering, in fact, fourteen strong, of whom nine were reported fit for service; the "balance of five," as their commercial leader observed, being either on the sick-list, or, at least, not ready for "all work," though too loyal to decline a labour of love like the present. The Count received the report of the commanding officer, and declared (addressing himself to Von Hoax, but loud enough to be overheard by the officer) that he had seldom seen a more soldierly body of men, or who had more the air of being *aguerris*. The officer's honest face burned with the anticipation of communicating so flattering a judgment to his corps; and his delight was not diminished by overhearing the words

"early promotion" and "order of merit." In the transports of his gratitude, he determined that the fourteen should fire a volley; but this was an event not to be accomplished in a hurry; much forethought and deep premeditation were required; a considerable "balance" of the gallant troops were not quite *au fait* in the art of loading, and a considerable "balance" of the muskets not quite *au fait* in the art of going off. Men and muskets being alike veterans, the agility of youth was not to be expected of them; and the issue was—that only two guns did actually go off. "But in commercial cities," as the good-natured Count observed to his host, "a large discount must always be made on prompt payment."

Breakfast was now over: the bells of the churches were ringing; the streets swarming with people in their holiday clothes; and numerous deputations, with addresses, petitions, &c., from the companies and guilds of the city were forming into processions. First came the town-council with the chief burgomaster at their head: the recent order for the reduction of fees, &c., was naturally made the subject of a dutiful remonstrance; and great was the joy with which the Count's answer was received: "On the word of a prince, he had never heard of it before: his signature must have been obtained by some court intrigue; but he could assure his faithful council that, on his return to his capital, his first care would be to punish the authors of so scandalous a measure, and to take such other steps, of an opposite description, as were due to the long services of the petitioners, and to the honour and dignity of the nation." The council were then presented *seriatim*, and had all the honour of kissing hands. These gentlemen having withdrawn, next came all the trading companies; each with an address of congratulation expressive of love and devotion, but uniformly bearing some little rider attached to it of a more exclusive nature. The tailors prayed for the general abolition of seamstresses, as nuisances and invaders of chartered rights. The shoemakers, in conjunction with the tanners and curriers, complained that Providence had in vain endowed leather with the valuable property of perishableness, if the selfishness of the iron-trade

were allowed to counteract this benign arrangement by driving nails into all men's shoe-soles. The hairdressers were modest, indeed too modest, in their demands, confining themselves to the request that, for the better encouragement of wigs, a tax should be imposed upon every man who presumed to wear his own hair, and that it should be felony for a gentleman to appear without powder. The glaziers were content with the existing state of things ; only that they felt it their duty to complain of the police regulation against breaking the windows of those who refused to join in public illuminations: a regulation the more harsh as it was well known that hail-storms had for many years sadly fallen off, and the present race of hailstones were scandalously degenerating from their ancestors of the last generation. The bakers complained that their enemies had accused them of wishing to sell their bread at a higher price ; which was a base insinuation ; all they wished for being that they might diminish their loaves in size ; and this, upon public grounds, was highly requisite: "fulness of bread" being notoriously the root of Jacobinism, and under the present assize of bread men ate so much bread that they did not know what the d—— they would be at. A course of small loaves would therefore be the best means of bringing them round to sound principles. To the bakers succeeded the projectors ; the first of whom offered to make the town conduits and sewers navigable, if his Highness would "lend him a thousand pounds." The clergy of the city, whose sufferings had been great from the weekly scourgings which they and their works received from the town newspaper, called out clamorously for a literary censorship. On the other hand, the editor of the newspaper prayed for unlimited freedom of the press, and abolition of the law of libel.

Certainly the Count Fitz-Hum must have had the happiest art of reconciling contradictions, and insinuating hopes into the most desperate cases ; for the petitioners, one and all, quitted his presence delighted and elevated with hope. Possibly one part of his secret might lie in the peremptory injunction which he laid upon all the petitioners to observe the profoundest silence for the present upon his intentions in their favour.

The corporate bodies were now despatched: but such was the report of the Prince's gracious affability that the whole town kept crowding to the Commissioner's house, and pressing for the honour of an audience. The Commissioner represented to the mob that his Highness was made neither of steel nor of granite, and was at length worn out by the fatigues of the day. But to this every man answered that what *he* had to say would be finished in two words, and could not add much to the Prince's fatigue; and all kept their ground before the house as firm as a wall. In this emergency the Count Fitz-Hum resorted to a *ruse*. He sent round a servant from the back door to mingle with the crowd, and proclaim that a mad dog was ranging about the streets, and had already bit many other dogs and several men. This answered: the cry of "mad dog" was set up; the mob flew asunder from their cohesion, and the blockade in front of Pig-house was raised. Farewell now to all faith in man or dog; for all might be among the bitten, and consequently might in turn be among the biters.

The night was now come; dinner was past, at which all the grandees of the place had been present: all had now departed, delighted with the condescensions of the Count, and puzzled only on one point, viz. the extraordinary warmth of his attentions to the Commissioner's daughter. The young lady's large fortune might have explained this excessive homage in any other case, but not in that of a Prince; and beauty or accomplishments they said she had none. Here, then, was subject for meditation without end to all the curious in natural philosophy. Amongst these, spite of parental vanity, were the Commissioner and his wife; but an explanation was soon given, which, however, did but explain one riddle by another. The Count desired a private interview, in which, to the infinite astonishment of the parents, he demanded the hand of their daughter in marriage. State policy, he was aware, opposed such connexions; but the pleadings of the heart outweighed all considerations of that sort; and he requested that, with the consent of the young lady, the marriage might be solemnized immediately. The honour was too much for the Commissioner; he felt himself in some measure guilty of treason by harbouring for

one moment hopes of so presumptuous a nature, and in a great panic he ran away and hid himself in the wine-cellar. Here he imbibed fresh courage ; and, upon his re-ascent to the upper world, and finding that his daughter joined her entreaties to those of the Count, he began to fear that the treason might lie on the other side, viz. in opposing the wishes of his sovereign, and he joyfully gave his consent : upon which, all things being in readiness, the marriage was immediately celebrated, and a select company who witnessed it had the honour of kissing the hand of the new Countess Fitz-Hum.

Scarcely was the ceremony concluded before a horseman's horn was heard at the Commissioner's gate. A special messenger with despatches, no doubt, said the Count ; and immediately a servant entered with a box bearing the state arms. Von Hoax unlocked the box ; and from a great body of papers, which he said were "*merely* petitions, addresses, or despatches from foreign powers," he drew out and presented to the Count a "despatch from the Privy Council." The Count read it, repeatedly shrugging his shoulders.

"No bad news, I hope ?" said the Commissioner, deriving courage from his recent alliance with the state personage to ask after the state affairs.

"No, no ! none of any importance," said the Count, with great suavity ; "a little rebellion, nothing more," smiling at the same time with the most imperturbable complacency.

"Rebellion !" said Mr. Pig, aloud ; "nothing *more* !" said Mr. Pig to himself. "Why, what upon earth——"

"Yes, my dear sir, rebellion ; a little rebellion. Very unpleasant, as I believe you were going to observe : truly unpleasant, and distressing to every well-regulated mind !"

"Distressing ! I should think so, and very awful. Are the rebels in strength ? Have they possessed themselves of——"

"Oh, my dear sir," interrupted Fitz-Hum, smiling with the utmost gaiety, "make yourself easy ; nothing like nipping these things in the bud. Vigour and well-placed lenity will do wonders. What most disturbs me, however, is the necessity of returning instantly to my capital ; to-morrow I must be at the head of my troops, who have already taken the field ; so that I shall be obliged to quit my beloved bride

without a moment's delay; for I would not have her exposed to the dangers of war, however transient."

At this moment the carriage, which had been summoned by Von Hoax, rolled up to the door; the Count whispered a few tender words in the ear of his bride; uttered some nothings to her father, of which all that transpired were the words—"truly distressing," and "every well-constituted mind"; smiled most graciously on the whole company; pressed the Commissioner's hand as fervently as he had done on his arrival; stept into the carriage; and in a few moments "the blue landau," together with "the superb whiskers," had rolled back through the city gates to their old original home.

Early the next morning, after solemn pledges of secrecy, the "rebellion" and the marriage were circulated in every quarter of the town; and the more so, as strict orders had been left to the contrary. With respect to the marriage, all parties (fathers especially, mothers, and daughters) agreed privately that his serene Highness was a great fool; but, as to the rebellion, the guilds and companies declared unanimously that they would fight for him to the last man. Meantime, the Commissioner presented his accounts to the council; they were of startling amount; and, although prompt payment seemed the most prudent course toward the father-in-law of a reigning prince, yet, on the other hand, the "rebellion" suggested arguments for demurring a little. And, accordingly, the Commissioner was informed that his accounts were admitted *ad deliberandum*. On returning home, the Commissioner found in the saloon a large despatch which had fallen out of the pocket of Von Hoax; this, he was at first surprised to discover, was nothing but a sheet of blank paper. However, on recollecting himself, "No doubt," said he, "in times of rebellion ink is not safe; besides, *carte blanche*—simple as it looks—is a profound diplomatic phrase, implying permission to dictate your own stipulations on a wide champaign acreage of white paper, not hedged in right and left by rascally conditions, not intersected by fences that cut up all freedom of motion." So saying, he sealed up the despatch, sent it off by an estafette, and charged it in a supplementary note of expenses to the council.

Meantime the newspapers arrived from the capital, but they said not a word of the rebellion; in fact they were more than usually dull, not containing even a lie of much interest. All this, however, the Commissioner ascribed to the prudential policy which their own safety dictated to the editors in times of rebellion; and the longer the silence lasted so much the more critical (it was inferred) must be the state of affairs, and so much the more prodigious that accumulating arrear of great events which any decisive blow would open upon them. At length, when the general patience began to give way, a newspaper arrived, which, under the head of domestic intelligence, communicated the following disclosures:—

"A curious hoax has been played off on a certain loyal and ancient borough town not a hundred miles from the little river P——. On the accession of our present gracious sovereign, and before his person was generally known to his subjects, a wager of large amount was laid by a certain Mr. Von Holster, who had been a gentleman of the bed-chamber to his late Highness, that he would succeed in passing himself off upon the whole town and corporation in question for the new prince. Having paved the way for his own success by a previous communication through a clerk in the house of W—— and Co., he departed on his errand, attended by an agent for the parties who had betted largely against him. This agent bore the name Von Hoax; and, by his report, the wager has been adjudged to Von Holster as brilliantly won. Thus far all was well; what follows, however, is still better. Some time ago a young lady of large fortune, and still larger expectations, on a visit to the capital, had met with Mr. Von H., and had clandestinely formed an acquaintance which had ripened into a strong attachment. The gentleman, however, had no fortune, or none which corresponded to the expectations of the lady's family. Under these circumstances, the lady (despairing in any other way of obtaining her father's consent) agreed that in connexion with his scheme for winning the wager Fitz-Hum should attempt another, more interesting to them both; in pursuance of which arrangement he contrived to fix himself under his princely incognito at the very house of Mr. Commissioner

P——, the father of his mistress; and the result is that he has actually married her with the entire approbation of her friends. Whether the sequel of the affair will correspond with its success hitherto remains, however, to be seen. Certain it is that for the present, until the prince's pleasure can be taken, Mr. Von Holster has been committed to prison under the new law for abolishing bets of a certain description, and also for having presumed to personate the sovereign."

Thus far the newspaper. However, in a few days, all clouds hanging over the prospects of the young couple cleared away. Mr. Von Holster, in a dutiful petition to the prince, declared that he had *not* personated his Serene Highness. On the contrary, he had given himself out both before and after his entry into the town of P—— for no more than the Count Fitz-Hum; and it was *they*, the good people of that town, who had insisted on mistaking him for a prince; if they *would* kiss his hand, was it for a humble individual of no pretensions whatever arrogantly to refuse? If they *would* make addresses to him, was it for an inconsiderable person like himself rudely to refuse their homage, when the greatest kings (as was notorious) always listened and replied in the most gracious terms? On further inquiry, the whole circumstances were detailed to the prince, and amused him greatly; but, when the narrator came to the final article of the "rebellion" (under which sounding title a friend of Von Holster's had communicated to him a general combination amongst his creditors for arresting his person), the good-natured prince laughed immoderately, and it became easy to see that no very severe punishment would follow. In fact, by his services to the late prince, Von H. had established some claims upon the gratitude of this, an acknowledgment which the prince generously made at this seasonable crisis. Such an acknowledgment from such a quarter, together with some other marks of favour to Von H., could not fail to pacify the "rebels" against that gentleman, and to reconcile Mr. Commissioner Pig to a marriage which he had already once approved. His scruples had originally been vanquished in the wine-cellar; and there also it was that, upon learning the total suppression of the insurrection, he drowned all his scruples for a second and a final time.

The town of M—— has, however, still occasion to remember the blue landau, and the superb whiskers, from the jokes which they are now and then called on to parry upon that subject. Dr. B——, in particular, the physician of that town, having originally offered five hundred dollars to the man who should notify to him his appointment to the place of court-physician, has been obliged solemnly to advertise in the gazette for the information of the wits in the capital, "That he will not consider himself bound by his promise, seeing that every week he received so many private notifications of that appointment that it would beggar him to pay for them at any such rate." With respect to the various petitioners,—the bakers, the glaziers, the hairdressers, &c.,—they all maintain that, though Fitz-Hum may have been a spurious prince, yet undoubtedly the man had so much sense and political discernment that he well deserved to have been a true one.

THE LOVE-CHARM

A TALE FROM THE GERMAN OF TIECK[1]

Emilius was sitting in deep thought at his table, awaiting his friend Roderick. The light was burning before him; the winter evening was cold; and to-day he wished for the presence of his fellow-traveller, though at other times wont rather to avoid his society: for on this evening he was about to disclose a secret to him, and beg for his advice. The timid, shy Emilius found in every business and accident of life so many difficulties, such unsurmountable hindrances, that it might seem to have been an ironical whim of his destiny which brought him and Roderick together, Roderick being in everything the reverse of his friend. Inconstant, flighty, always determined by the first impression, and kindling in an instant, he engaged in everything, had a plan for every occasion; no undertaking was too arduous for him, no obstacle could deter him. But in the midst of the pursuit he slackened and wearied just as suddenly as at first he had caught fire and sprung forward. Whatever then opposed him was for him not a spur to urge him onward, but only led him to abandon what he had so hotly rushed into; so that Roderick was every day thoughtlessly beginning something new, and with no better cause relinquishing and idly forgetting what he had begun the day before. Hence, never a day passed but the friends got into a quarrel which seemed to threaten the death of their friendship; and yet what to all

[1] Published originally in 1825 in an extra number of *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*: not reprinted by De Quincey in the Collective Edition of his writings. For particulars see Editor's Preface.—M.

appearance thus severed them was perhaps the very thing that most closely bound them together ; each loved the other heartily ; but each found passing satisfaction in being able to discharge the most justly deserved reproaches upon his friend.

Emilius, a rich young man, of a susceptible and melancholy temperament, on the death of his parents had become master of his fortune. He had set out on a journey in order thereby to complete his education, but had now already spent several months in a large town, for the sake of enjoying the pleasures of the carnival, about which he never gave himself the least trouble, and of making certain arrangements of importance about his fortune with some relations, to whom as yet he had scarcely paid a visit. On the road he had fallen in with the restless, ever shifting and veering Roderick, who was living at variance with his guardians, and who, to free himself wholly from them and their burdensome admonitions, eagerly grasped at the opportunity held out to him by his new friend of becoming his companion on his travels. During their journey they had often been on the point of separating ; but each after every dispute had only felt the more clearly that he could not live without the other. Scarce had they left their carriage in any town when Roderick had already seen everything remarkable in it, to forget it all again on the morrow ; while Emilius took a week to acquire a thorough knowledge of the place from his books, lest he should omit seeing anything that was to be seen, and after all, from indolence and indifference, thought there was hardly anything worth his while to go and look at. Roderick had immediately made a thousand acquaintances, and visited every public place of entertainment ; often too he brought his new-made friends to the lonely chamber of Emilius, and would then leave him alone with them, as soon as they began to tire him. At other times he would confound the modest Emilius by extravagantly praising his merits and his acquirements before intelligent and learned men, and by giving them to understand how much they might learn from his friend about languages, or antiquities, or the fine arts, although he himself could never find time for listening to him on such subjects when the conversation

happened to turn on them. But, if Emilius ever chanced to be in a more active mood, he might almost make sure of his truant friend having caught cold the night before at a ball or a sledge-party, and being forced to keep his bed ; so that, with the liveliest, most restless, and most communicative of men for his companion, Emilius lived in the greatest solitude.

To-day he confidently expected him ; for Roderick had been forced to give him a solemn promise of spending the evening with him, in order to learn what it was that for weeks had been depressing and agitating his thoughtful friend. Meanwhile Emilius wrote down the following lines :—

'Tis sweet when spring its choir assembles,
And every nightingale is steeping
The trees in his melodious weeping,
Till leaf and bloom with rapture trembles.

Fair is the net which moonlight weaves ;
Fair are the breezes' gambolings,
As with lime-odours on their wings
They chase each other through the leaves.

Bright is the glory of the rose
When Love's rich magic decks the earth ;
From countless roses Love looks forth,
Those stars wherewith Love's heaven glows.

But sweeter, fairer, brighter far
To me that little lamp's pale gleaming,
When, through the narrow casement streaming,
It bids me hail my evening star ;

As from their braids her locks she flings,
Then twines them in a flowery band,
While at each motion of her hand
The white robe to her fair form clings ;

Or when she breaks her lute's deep slumbers,
And, as at morning's touch up-darting,
The notes, beneath her fingers starting,
Dance o'er the strings in playful numbers.

To stop their flight her voice she pours
Full after them ; they laugh and fly,
And to my heart for refuge hie ;
Her voice pursues them through its doors.

Leave me, ye fierce ones ! hence remove !
They bar themselves within, and say
'Till this be broken, here we stay,
That thou mayst know what 'tis to love.'

Emilius arose fretfully. It grew darker, and Roderick came not, and he was wishing to tell him of his love for an unknown fair one, who dwelt in the opposite house, and who kept him all day long at home, and waking through many a night. At length footsteps sounded up the stairs ; the door opened without anybody knocking at it ; and in walked two gay masks with ugly visages,—one a Turk, dressed in red and blue silk, the other a Spaniard in pale yellow and pink, with many waving feathers on his hat. As Emilius was becoming impatient, Roderick took off his mask, showed his well-known laughing countenance, and said : "Heyday, my good friend, what a drowned puppy of a face ! Is this the way to look in carnival time ? I and our dear young officer are come to fetch you away. There is a grand ball to-night at the masquerade rooms ; and, as I know you have forsworn ever going out in any other suit than that which you always wear, of the devil's own colour, come with us as black as you are, for it is already somewhat late."

Emilius felt angry, and said : "You have, it seems, according to custom, altogether forgotten our agreement. I am extremely sorry," he continued, turning to the stranger, "that I cannot possibly accompany you ; my friend has been over-hasty in promising for me ; indeed I cannot go out at all, having something of importance to talk to him about."

The stranger, who was well-bred, and saw what Emilius meant, withdrew ; but Roderick, with the utmost indifference, put on his mask again, placed himself before the glass, and said : "Verily I am a hideous figure, am I not ? To say the truth, it is a tasteless, worthless, disgusting device."

"That there can be no question about," answered Emilius, in high indignation. "Making a caricature of yourself, and making a fool of yourself, are among the pleasures you are always driving after at full gallop."

"Because you do not like dancing yourself," said the other, "and look upon dancing as a mischievous invention,

not a soul in the world must wear a merry face. How tiresome it is when a person is made up of nothing but whims!"

"Doubtless!" replied his angry friend, "and you give me ample opportunity for finding that it is so. I thought after our agreement you would have given me this evening; but——"

"But it is the carnival, you know," pursued the other, "and all my acquaintances and certain fair ladies are expecting me at the grand ball to-night. Assure yourself, my good friend, it is mere disease in you that makes you so unreasonable against all such matters."

"Which of us has the fairest claim to disease," said Emilius, "I will not examine. At least your inconceivable frivolousness, your hunger and thirst after stop-gaps for every hour you are awake, your wild-goose chase after pleasures that leave the heart empty, seem not to me altogether the healthiest state of the soul. In certain things, at all events, you might make a little allowance for my weakness, if it must once for all pass for such: and there is nothing in the world that so jars through and through me as a ball, with its frightful music. Somebody once said that to a deaf person who cannot hear the music a set of dancers must look like so many patients for a mad-house; but, in my opinion, this dreadful music itself, this twirling and whirling and pirouetting of half a dozen notes, each treading on its own heels, in those accursed tunes which ram themselves into our memories—yea, I might say, mix themselves up with our very blood, so that one cannot get rid of their taint for many a miserable day after—this to me is the very trance of madness; and, if I could ever bring myself to think dancing endurable, it must be dancing to the tune of silence."

"Well done, Signor Paradox-monger!" exclaimed the mask. "Why, you are so far gone that you think the most natural, most innocent, and merriest thing in the world unnatural, ay, and shocking."

"I cannot change my feelings," said his grave friend. "From my very childhood these tunes have made me wretched, and have often well-nigh driven me out of my senses. They are to me the ghosts and spectres and furies in

the world of sound, and come thus and buzz round my head, and grin at me with horrid laughter."

"All nervous irritability!" returned the other; "just like your extravagant abhorrence of spiders and many other harmless insects."

"Harmless you call them," cried Emilius, now quite untuned, "because you have no repugnance toward them. To one, however, who feels the same disgust and loathing, the same nameless horror, that I feel, rise up in his soul and shoot through his whole being at the sight of them, these miscreate deformities, such as toads, spiders, or that most loathsome of nature's excrements, the bat, are not indifferent or insignificant: their very existence is directly at enmity and wages war with his. In truth, one might smile at the unbelievers whose imagination is too barren for ghosts and fearful spectres, and those births of night which we see in sickness, to take root therein, or who stare and marvel at Dante's descriptions, when the commonest every-day life brings before our eyes such frightful distorted masterpieces among the works of horror. Yet, can we really and faithfully love the beautiful, without being stricken with pain at the sight of such monstrosities?"

"Wherefore stricken with pain?" asked Roderick. "Why should the great realms of the waters and the seas present us with nothing but those terrors which you have accustomed yourself to find there? Why not rather look on such creatures as strange, entertaining, and ludicrous mummers, and on the whole region in the light of a great masked ball room? But your whims go still further; for, as you love roses with a kind of idolatry, there are many flowers for which you have a no less vehement hatred: yet what harm has the dear good tulip ever done you, or all the other dutiful children of summer that you persecute? So again you have an aversion to many colours, to many scents, and to many thoughts; and you take no pains to harden yourself against these weaknesses, but yield to them and sink down into them as into a luxurious feather-bed; and I often fear I shall lose you altogether some day, and find nothing but a patchwork of whims and prejudices sitting at that table instead of my Emilius."

Emilius was wroth to the bottom of his heart, and answered not a word. He had long given up all design of making his intended confession; nor did the thoughtless Roderick show the least wish to hear the secret which his melancholy friend had announced to him with such an air of solemnity. He sat carelessly in the arm-chair, playing with his mask, when he suddenly cried: "Be so kind, Emilius, as to lend me your large cloak."

"What for?" asked the other.

"I hear music in the church on the opposite side of the street," answered Roderick, "and this hour has hitherto escaped me every evening since we have been here. To-day it comes just as if called for. I can hide my dress under your cloak, which will also cover my mask and turban, and when it is over I can go straight to the ball."

Emilius muttered between his teeth as he looked in the wardrobe for his cloak; then, constraining himself to an ironical smile, gave it to Roderick, who was already on his legs. "There is my Turkish dagger which I bought yesterday," said the mask, as he wrapped himself up; "put it by for me; it is a bad habit carrying about toys of cold steel: one can never tell what ill use may be made of them, should a quarrel arise, or any other knot which it is easier to cut than to untie. We meet again to-morrow. Farewell; a pleasant evening to you!" He waited for no reply, but hastened down-stairs.

When Emilius was alone, he tried to forget his anger, and to fix his attention on the laughable side of his friend's behaviour. After a while his eyes rested upon the shining, finely-wrought dagger, and he said: "What must be the feelings of a man who could thrust this sharp iron into the breast of an enemy! but oh, what must be those of one who could hurt a beloved object with it! He locked it up, then gently folded back the shutters of his window, and looked across the narrow street. But no light was there; all was dark in the opposite house; the dear form that dwelt in it, and that used about this time to show herself at her household occupations, seemed to be absent. "Perhaps she is at the ball," thought Emilius, little as it suited her retired way of life.

Suddenly, however, a light entered ; the little girl whom his beloved unknown had about her, and with whom, during the day and evening, she busied herself in various ways, carried a candle through the room, and closed the window-shutters. An opening remained light, large enough for overlooking a part of the little chamber from the spot where Emilius stood ; and there the happy youth would often bide till after midnight, fixed as though he had been charmed there. He was full of gladness when he saw her teaching the child to read, or instructing her in sewing and knitting. Upon inquiry he had learnt that the little girl was a poor orphan whom his fair maiden had charitably taken into the house to educate. Emilius's friends could not conceive why he lived in this narrow street, in this comfortless lodging, why he was so little to be seen in society, or how he employed himself. Without employment, in solitude he was happy : only he felt angry with himself and his own timidity and shyness, which kept him from venturing to seek a nearer acquaintance with this fair being, notwithstanding the friendliness with which on many occasions she had greeted and thanked him. He knew not that she would often bend over him eyes no less love-sick than his own ; nor boded what wishes were forming in her heart,—of what an effort, of what a sacrifice, she felt herself capable, so she might but attain to the possession of his love.

After walking a few times up and down the room, when the light had departed with the child, he suddenly resolved upon going to the ball, though it was so against his inclination and his nature ; for it struck him that his Unknown might have made an exception to her quiet mode of life, in order for once to enjoy the world and its gaieties. The streets were brilliantly lighted up ; the snow crackled under his feet ; carriages rolled by ; and masks in every variety of dress whistled and chirped as they passed him. From many a house there sounded the dancing-music he so abhorred, and he could not bring himself to go the nearest way towards the ball-room, whither people from every direction were streaming and thronging. He walked round the old church, gazed at its lofty tower rising solemnly into the dark sky, and felt gladdened by the stillness and loneliness of the remote square.

Within the recess of a large doorway, the varied sculptures of which he had always contemplated with pleasure,—recollecting, while so engaged, the olden times and the arts which adorned them,—he now again paused, to give himself up for a few moments to his thoughts. He had not stood long before a figure drew his attention which kept restlessly walking to and fro, and seemed to be waiting for somebody. By the light of a lamp that was burning before an image of the Virgin, he clearly distinguished its features as well as its strange garb. It was an old woman of the uttermost hideousness,—which struck the eye the more from being brought out by its extravagant contrast with a scarlet bodice embroidered with gold: the gown she wore was dark, and the cap on her head shone likewise with gold. Emilius fancied at first it must be some tasteless mask that had strayed there by mistake; but he was soon convinced by the clear light that the old, brown, wrinkled face was one of Nature's ploughing, and no mimic exaggeration. Many minutes had not passed when there appeared two men, wrapped up in cloaks, who seemed to approach the spot with cautious footsteps, often looking about them, as if to observe whether anybody was following. The old woman walked up to them. "Have you got the candles?" asked she hastily, and with a gruff voice. "Here they are," said one of the men; "you know the price; let the matter be settled forthwith." The old woman seemed to be giving him money, which he counted over beneath his cloak. "I rely upon you," she again began, "that they are made exactly according to the prescription, at the right time and place, so that the work cannot fail." "Feel safe as to that," returned the man, and walked rapidly away. The other, who remained behind, was a youth: he took the old woman by the hand, and said: "Can it then be, Alexia, that such rites and forms of words,—as those old stories, in which I never could put faith, tell us,—can fetter the free will of man, and make love and hatred grow in the heart?" "So it is," answered the scarlet woman; "but one and one must make two, and many a one must be added thereto before such things come to pass. It is not these candles alone, moulded beneath the midnight darkness of the new moon, and drenched with human blood,—it is not the muttering

magical words and invocations alone,—that can give you the mastery over the soul of another; much more than this belongs to such works; but it is all known to the initiated." "I rely on you, then," said the stranger. "To-morrow after midnight I am at your service," returned the old woman. "You shall not be the first person that ever was dissatisfied with the tidings I brought him. To-night, as you have heard, I have some one else in hand, one whose senses and understanding our art shall twist about whichever way we choose, as easily as I twist this hair out of my head." These last words she uttered with a half grin: they now separated, and withdrew in different directions.

Emilius came from the dark niche shuddering, and raised his looks upon the image of the Virgin with the Child. "Before thine eyes, thou mild and blessed one," said he, half aloud, "are these miscreants daring to hold their market, and trafficking in their hellish drugs! But, as thou embracest thy Child with thy love, even so doth the unseen Love hold us all in its protecting arms; and we feel their touch, and our poor hearts beat in joy and in trembling toward a greater heart that will never forsake us."

Clouds were wandering along over the pinnacles of the tower and the steep roof of the church; the everlasting stars looked down from amongst them, sparkling with mild serenity; and Emilius turned his thoughts resolutely away from these nightly horrors, and thought upon the beauty of his Unknown. He again entered the living streets, and bent his steps toward the brightly illuminated ball-room, whence voices, and the rattling of carriages, and now and then, between the pauses, the clamorous music, came sounding to his ears.

In the hall he was instantly lost amid the streaming throng. Dancers sprang round him, masks shot by him to and fro, kettle-drums and trumpets deafened his ears; and it was unto him as though human life were nothing but a dream. He walked along the lines; his eye alone was watchful, seeking for those beloved eyes and that fair head with its brown locks for the sight of which he yearned to-day even more intensely than at other times; and yet he inwardly reproached the adored being for enduring to plunge

into, and lose itself in, such a stormy sea of confusion and folly. "No," said he to himself; "no heart that loves can lay itself open to this waste hubbub of noise, in which every longing and every tear of love is scoffed and mocked at by the pealing laughter of wild trumpets. The whispering of trees, the murmuring of fountains, harp-tones, and gentle song gushing forth from an overflowing bosom, are the sounds in which love abides. But this is the very thundering and shouting of hell in the trance of its despair."

He found not what he was seeking; for the belief that her beloved face might perchance be lying hid behind some odious mask was what he could not possibly bring himself to. Thrice already had he ranged up and down the hall, and had vainly passed in array every sitting and unmasked female, when the Spaniard joined him and said: "I am glad that after all you are come. You seem to be looking for your friend."

Emilius had quite forgotten him: he said, however, in some confusion: "Indeed I wonder at not having met him here; his mask is easily known."

"Can you guess what the strange fellow is about?" answered the young officer. "He did not dance, or even remain half an hour in the ball-room; for he soon met with his friend Anderson, who is just come from the country. Their conversation fell upon literature. As Anderson had not yet seen the new poem, Roderick would not rest till they had opened one of the back rooms for him; and there he now is, sitting with his companion beside a solitary taper, and declaiming the whole poem to him, beginning with the invocation to the Muse."

"It is just like him," said Emilius; "he is always the child of the moment. I have done all in my power, not even shunning some amicable quarrels, to break him of this habit of always living extempore, and playing away his whole being in impromptus, card after card, as it happens to turn up, without once looking through his hand. But these follies have taken such deep root in his heart, he would sooner part with his best friend than with them. That very same poem, of which he is so fond that he always carries a copy of it in his pocket, he was desirous of reading to me; and I had even

urgently entreated him to do so; but we were scarcely over the first description of the moon, when, just as I was resigning myself to an enjoyment of its beauties, he suddenly jumped up, ran off, came back with the cook's apron round his waist, tore down the bell-rope in ringing to have the fire lighted, and insisted on dressing me some beef-steaks, for which I had not the least appetite, and of which he fancies himself the best cook in Europe, though, if he is lucky, he spoils them only nine times out of ten."

The Spaniard laughed, and asked: "Has he never been in love?"

"In his way," replied Emilius very gravely; "as if he were making game both of love and of himself, with a dozen women at a time, and, if you would believe his words, raving after every one of them; but ere a week passes over his head they are all sponged out of it together, and not even a blot of them remains."

They parted in the crowd, and Emilius walked toward the remote apartment whence already from afar he heard his friend's loud recitative. "Ah, so you are here too," cried Roderick, as he entered; "that is just what it should be. I have got to the very passage at which we broke down the other day; seat yourself, and you may listen to the rest."

"I am not in a humour for it now," said Emilius; "besides, the room and the hour do not seem to me altogether fitted for such an employment."

"And why not?" answered Roderick. "Time and place are made for us, and not we for time and place. Is not good poetry as good at one place as at another? Or would you prefer dancing? there is scarcity of men; and, with the help of nothing more than a few hours' jumping and a pair of tired legs, you may lay strong siege to the hearts of as many grateful beauties as you please."

"Good-bye!" cried the other, already in the doorway; "I am going home."

Roderick called after him: "Only one word! I set off with this gentleman at daybreak to-morrow, to spend a few days in the country, but will look in upon you to take leave before we start. Should you be asleep, as is most likely, do not take the trouble of waking; for in a couple of days I

shall be with you again.—The strangest being on earth!" he continued, turning to his new friend, "so moping and fretful and gloomy that he turns all his pleasures sour; or rather there is no such thing as pleasure for him. Instead of walking about with his fellow-creatures in broad daylight and enjoying himself, he gets down to the bottom of the well of his thoughts, for the sake of now and then having a glimpse of a star. Everything must be in the superlative for him; everything must be pure and noble and celestial; his heart must be always heaving and throbbing, even when he is standing before a puppet-show. He never laughs or cries, but can only smile and weep; and there is mighty little difference between his weeping and his smiling. When anything, be it what you will, falls short of his anticipations and preconceptions, which are always flying up out of reach and sight, he puts on a tragical face, and complains that it is a base and soulless world. At this moment, I doubt not, he is exacting that under the masks of a Pantaloon and a Pulcinello there should be a heart glowing with unearthly desires and ideal aspirations, and that Harlequin should outmoralise Hamlet upon the nothingness of sublunary things; and, should it not be so, the dew will rise into his eyes, and he will turn his back on the whole scene with desponding contempt."

"He must be melancholic then?" asked his hearer.

"Not that exactly," answered Roderick. "He has only been spoilt by his over-fond parents, and by himself. He has accustomed himself to let his heart ebb and flow as regularly as the sea; and, if this motion ever chances to intermit, he cries out *miracle!* and would offer a prize to the genius that can satisfactorily explain so marvellous a phenomenon. He is the best fellow under the sun; but all my painstaking to break him of this perverseness is utterly vain and thrown away; and, if I would not earn sorry thanks for my good intentions, I must even let him follow his own course."

"He seems to need a physician," remarked Anderson.

"It is one of his whims," said Roderick, "to entertain a supreme contempt for the whole medical art. He will have it that every disease is something different and distinct in

every patient, that it can be brought under no class, and that it is absurd to think of healing it, either by attention to ancient practice or by what is called theory. Indeed he would much rather apply to an old woman, and make use of sympathetic cures. On the same principle, he despises all foresight, on whatever occasion, as well as everything like regularity, moderation, and common sense. The last above all he holds in especial abhorrence, as the antipodes and arch-enemy of all enthusiasm. From his very childhood he framed for himself an ideal of a noble character; and his highest aim is to render himself what he considers such,—that is, a being who shows his superiority to all things earthy by his contempt for gold. Merely in order that he may not be suspected of being parsimonious, or giving unwillingly, or ever talking about money, he tosses it about him right and left by handfuls,—with all his large income is for ever poor and distressed, and becomes the fool of everybody not endowed with precisely the same kind of magnanimity which for himself he is determined that he will have. To be his friend is the undertaking of all undertakings; for he is so irritable, one need only cough or eat with one's knife, or even pick one's teeth, to offend him mortally."

"Was he never in love?" asked his country friend.

"Whom should he love? whom could he love?" answered Roderick. "He scorns all the daughters of earth; and, were he ever to suspect that his beloved had not an angelical contempt for dress, or liked dancing as well as star-gazing, it would break his heart; still more appalling would it be if she were ever so unfortunate as to sneeze."

Meanwhile Emilius was again standing amid the throng; but suddenly there came over him that uneasiness, that shivering, which had already so often seized his heart when among a crowd in a state of similar excitement; it chased him out of the ball-room and house, down along the deserted streets; nor, till he reached his lonely chamber, did he recover himself and the quiet possession of his senses. The night-light was already kindled; he sent his servant to bed; everything in the opposite house was silent and dark; and he sat down to pour forth in verse the feelings which had been aroused by the ball:—

Within the heart 'tis still ;
Sleep each wild thought encages :
Now stirs a wicked will,
Would see how madness rages,
And cries, Wild Spirit, awake !
Loud cymbals catch the cry,
And back its echoes shake ;
And, shouting peals of laughter,
The trumpet rushes after,
And cries, Wild Spirit, awake !
Amidst them flute-tones fly,
Like arrows keen and numberless ;
And with bloodhound yell
Pipes the onset swell ;
And violins and violoncellos,
Creaking, clattering,
Shrieking and shattering ;
And horns whence thunder bellows ;
To leave the victim slumberless,
And drag forth prisoned madness,
And cruelly murder all quiet and innocent gladness.

What will be the end of this commotion ?
Where the shore to this turmoiling ocean ?
What seeks the tossing throng,
As it wheels and whirls along ?
On ! on ! the lustres
Like hell-stars bicker :
Let us twine in closer clusters.
On ! on ! ever thicker and quicker !
How the silly things throb, throb amain !
Hence, all quiet !
Hither, riot !
Peal more proudly,
Squeal more loudly,
Ye cymbals, ye trumpets ! Bedull all pain,
Till it laugh again.

Thou beckonest to me, beauty's daughter ;
Smiles ripple over thy lips,
And o'er thine eyes blue water ;
O let me breathe on thee
Ere parted hence we flee,
Ere aught that light eclipse !
I know that beauty's flowers soon wither :
Those lips within whose rosy cells
Thy spirit warbles its sweet spells
Death's clammy kiss ere long will press together.
I know that face so fair and full
Is but a masquerading skull ;

But hail to thee, skull so fair and so fresh !
  Why should I weep and whine, and wail
  That what blooms now must soon grow pale,
That worms must feed on that sweet flesh ?
  Let me laugh but to-day and to-morrow,
  And I care not for sorrow,
While thus on the waves of the dance by each other we sail !

  Now thou art mine,
  And I am thine :
And what though pain and sorrow wait
  To seize thee at the gate,
And sob and tear and groan and sigh
  Stand ranged in state
On thee to fly !
  Blithely let us look and cheerily
  On death, that grins so drearily.
What would grief with us, or anguish ?
They are foes that we know how to vanquish.
  I press thine answering fingers ;
  Thy look upon me lingers ;
Or the fringe of thy garment will waft me a kiss :
  Thou rollest on in light ;
  I fall back into night ;
Even despair is bliss.

  From this delight,
From this wild laughter's surge,
Perchance there may emerge
  Foul jealousy and scorn and spite.
But this is our glory and pride !
  When thee I despise,
  I turn but mine eyes,
  And the fair one beside thee will welcome my gaze,
And she is my bride !
  Oh, happy, happy days !
Or shall it be her neighbour,
Whose eyes like a sabre
Flash and pierce,
Their glance is so fierce ?

Thus capering and prancing,
All together go dancing
  Adown life's giddy cave ;
Nor living nor loving,
But dizzily roving
  Through dreams to a grave.
There below 'tis yet worse ;
  Its flowers and its clay
  Roof a gloomier day,
Hide a still deeper curse.

Ring, then, ye cymbals, enliven this dream!
Ye horns, shout a fiercer, more vulture-like scream!
And jump, caper, leap, prance, dance yourselves out of breath!
For your life is all art;
Love has given you no heart;
Therefore shout till ye plunge into bottomless death.

He had ended, and was standing at the window. Then came she into the opposite chamber,—lovely, as he had never yet seen her; her brown hair floated freely and played in wanton ringlets about the whitest of necks; she was but lightly clad, and it seemed as though she was about to finish some household task at this late hour of the night before going to bed; for she placed two lights in two corners of the room, set to rights the green baize on the table, and again retired. Emilius was still sunk in his sweet dreams, and gazing on the image which his beloved had left on his mind, when, to his horror, the fearful, the scarlet, old woman walked through the chamber: the gold on her head and breast glared ghastlily as it threw back the light. She had vanished again. Was he to believe his eyes? Was it not some blinding deception of the night, some spectre that his own feverish imagination had conjured up before him? But no! she returned, still more hideous than before, with a long gray-and-black mane flying wildly and ruggedly about her breast and back. The fair maiden followed her, pale, frozen up; her lovely bosom was without a covering; but the whole form was like a marble statue. Betwixt them they led the little sweet child, weeping and clinging entreatingly to the fair maiden, who looked not down upon it. The child clasped and lifted up its little beseeching hands, and stroked the pale neck and cheeks of the marble beauty. But she held it fast by the hair, and in the other hand a silver basin. Then the old woman gave a growl, and pulled out a long knife, and drew it across the white neck of the child. Here something wound forth from behind them, which they seemed not to perceive; or it must have produced in them the same deep horror as in Emilius. The ghastly neck of a serpent curled forth, scale after scale, lengthening and ever lengthening out of the darkness, and stooped down between them over the child, whose lifeless limbs hung from the old

woman's arms ; its black tongue licked up the spirting red blood, and a green sparkling eye shot over into Emilius's eye, and brain, and heart, so that he fell at the same instant to the ground.

He was senseless when found by Roderick some hours after.

. . . . .

A party of friends was sitting, on the brightest summer morning, in a green arbour, assembled round an excellent breakfast. Laughter and jests passed round, and many a time did the glasses kiss with a merry health to the youthful couple, and a wish that they might be the happiest of the happy. The bride and bridegroom were not present ; the fair one being still busied about her dress, while the young husband was sauntering alone in a distant avenue, musing upon his happiness.

"What a pity," said Anderson, "that we are to have no music. All our ladies are beclouded at the thought, and never in their whole lives longed for a dance so much as to-day, when to have one is quite out of the question. It is far too painful to his feelings."

"I can tell you a secret, though," said a young officer ; "which is that we are to have a dance after all, and a rare madcap and riotous one it will be. Everything is already arranged ; the musicians are come secretly, and quartered out of sight. Roderick has managed it all ; for, he says, one ought not to let him have his own way, or to humour his strange prejudices over-much, especially on such a day as this. Besides, he is already grown far more like a human being, and is much more sociable than he used to be ; so that I think even he will not dislike this alteration. Indeed, the whole wedding has been brought about all of a sudden, in a way that nobody could have expected."

"His whole life," said Anderson, "is no less singular than his character. You must all remember how, being engaged on his travels, he arrived last autumn in our city, fixed himself there for the winter, lived like a melancholy man, scarcely ever leaving his room, and never gave himself the least trouble about our theatre or any other amusement.

He almost quarrelled with Roderick, his most intimate friend, for trying to divert him, and not pampering him in all his moping humours. In fact, this exaggerated irritability and moodiness must have been a disease that was gathering in his body ; for, as you know, he was seized four months since with a most violent nervous fever, so that we were all forced to give him up for lost. After his fancies had raved themselves out, on returning to his senses, he had almost entirely lost his memory ; his childhood, indeed, and his early youth were still present to his mind, but he could not recollect anything that had occurred during his travels, or immediately before his illness. He was forced to begin anew his acquaintance with all his friends, even with Roderick ; and only by little and little has it grown lighter with him ; but slowly has the past with all that had befallen him come again, though still in dim colours, over his memory. He had been removed into his uncle's house, that the better care might be taken of him ; and he was like a child, letting them do with him whatever they chose. The first time he went out to enjoy the warmth of spring in the park, he saw a girl sitting thoughtfully by the road-side. She looked up ; her eye met his ; and, as it were seized with an unaccountable yearning, he bade the carriage stop, got out, sat down by her, took hold of her hands, and poured himself forth in a full stream of tears. His friends were again alarmed for his understanding ; but he grew tranquil, lively and conversable, got introduced to the girl's parents, and at the very first besought her hand ; which, as her parents did not refuse their consent, she granted him. Thenceforward he was happy, and a new life sprang up within him ; every day he became healthier and more cheerful. A week ago he visited me at this country-seat of mine, and was above measure delighted with it ; indeed so much so that he would not rest till he had made me sell it to him. I might easily have turned his passionate wish to my own good account, and to his injury ; for, whenever he sets his heart on a thing, he will have it, and that forthwith. He immediately made his arrangements, and had furniture brought hither that he may spend the summer months here ; and in this way it has come to pass that we are all now assembled together to celebrate our

friend's marriage at this villa, which a few days since belonged to me."

The house was large, and situated in a very lovely country. One side looked down upon a river, and beyond it upon pleasant hills, clad and girt round with shrubs and trees of various kinds ; immediately before it lay a beautiful flower-garden. Here the orange and lemon trees were ranged in a large open hall, from which small doors led to the store-rooms, and cellars and pantries. On the other side spread the green plain of a meadow, which was immediately bordered by a large park. Here the two long wings of the house formed a spacious court ; and three broad, open galleries, supported by rows of pillars standing above each other, connected all the apartments in the building,—which gave it on this side an interesting and singular character; for figures were continually moving along these arcades in the discharge of their various household tasks ; new forms kept stepping forth between the pillars, and out of every room, which reappeared soon after above or below, to be lost behind some other doors ; the company too would often assemble there for tea or for play ; and thus, when seen from below, the whole had the look of a theatre, before which everybody would gladly pause a while, expecting, as his fancies wandered, that something strange or pleasing would soon be taking place above.

The party of young people were just rising, when the full-dressed bride came through the garden and walked up to them. She was clad in violet-coloured velvet ; a sparkling necklace lay cradled on her white neck ; the costly lace just allowed her swelling bosom to glimmer through ; her brown hair was tinged yet more beautifully by its wreath of myrtles and white roses. She addressed each in turn with a kind greeting, and the young men were astonished at her surpassing beauty. She had been gathering flowers in the garden, and was now returning into the house, to see after the preparations for the dinner. The tables had been placed in the lower open gallery, and shone dazzlingly with their white coverings and their load of sparkling crystal ; rich clusters of many-coloured flowers rose from the graceful necks of alabaster vases ; green garlands, starred with white

blossoms, twined round the columns; and it was a lovely sight to behold the bride gliding along with gentle motion between the tables and the pillars, amid the light of the flowers, overlooking the whole with a searching glance, then vanishing, and reappearing a moment afterwards higher up to pass into her chamber.

"She is the loveliest and most enchanting creature I ever saw," cried Anderson; "our friend is indeed the happiest of men."

"Even her paleness," said the officer, taking up the word, "heightens her beauty. Her brown eyes sparkle only more intensely above those white cheeks, and beneath those dark locks; and the singular, almost burning, redness of her lips gives a truly magical appearance to her face."

"The air of silent melancholy that surrounds her," said Anderson, "sheds a lofty majesty over her whole form."

The bridegroom joined them, and inquired after Roderick. They had all missed him some time since, and could not conceive where he could be tarrying; and they all set out in search of him. "He is below in the hall," said at length a young man whom they happened to ask, "in the midst of the coachmen, footmen, and grooms, showing off tricks at cards, which they cannot grow tired of staring at." They went in, and interrupted the noisy admiration of the servants, without, however, disturbing Roderick, who quietly pursued his conjuring exhibition. When he had finished, he walked with the others into the garden, and said, "I do it only to strengthen the fellows in their faith: for these puzzles give a hard blow to their groomships' free-thinking inclinations, and help to make them true believers."

"I see," said the bridegroom, "my all-sufficing friend, among his other talents, does not think that of a mountebank beneath his cultivation."

"We live in a strange time," replied the other. "Who knows whether mountebanks may not come to rule the roost in their turn? One ought to despise nothing nowadays: the veriest straw of talent may be that which is to break the camel's back."

When the two friends found themselves alone, Emilius

again turned down the dark avenue, and said, "Why am I in such a gloomy mood on this the happiest day of my life? But I assure you, Roderick, little as you will believe it, I am not made for this moving about among such a mob of human beings; for this keeping my attention on the *qui vive* for every letter of the alphabet, so that neither A nor Z may go without all fitting respect; for this making a bow to *her* tenth cousin, and shaking hands with *my* twentieth; for this rendering of formal homage to her parents; for this handing a flower from my nosegay of compliments to every lady that crosses my eye; for this waiting to receive a tide of newcomers as wave after wave rushes over me, and then turning to give orders that their servants and horses may have each a full trough and pail set before them."

"That is a watch that goes of its own accord," answered Roderick. "Only look at your house: it was just built for such an occasion; and your head-butler, with his right hand taking up at the same time that his left is setting down, and one leg running north while the other seems to be making for south, was begotten and born for no other end than to put confusion in order. He would even set my brains to rights if he could get at them; were the whole city here he would find room for all; and he will make your hospitality the proverb of fifty miles round. Leave all such things to him and to your lovely bride; and where will you find so sweet a lightener of this world's cares?"

"This morning before sunrise," said Emilius, "I was walking through the wood; my thoughts were solemnly tuned, and I felt at the bottom of my soul that my life was now receiving its determinate character, that it was become a serious thing, and that this passion had created for me a home and a calling. I passed along by that arbour there, and heard sounds: it was my beloved in close conversation. 'Has it not turned out now as I told you?' said a strange voice; 'just as I knew it must turn out. You have got your wish; so cheer up and be merry.' I would not go near them; afterwards I walked toward the arbour, but they had both already left it. Since then I keep thinking and thinking, What can these words mean?"

Roderick answered: "Perhaps she may have been in love

with you for some time without your knowing it; you are only so much the happier."

A late nightingale here upraised her song, and seemed to be wishing the lover health and bliss. Emilius became more thoughtful. "Come down with me, to cheer up your spirits," said Roderick, "down to the village, where you will find another couple; for you must not fancy that yours is the only wedding on which to-day's sun is to shine. A young clown, finding his time wear heavily in the house with an ugly old maid, for want of something better to do, did what makes the booby now think himself bound in honour to transform her into his wife. By this time they must both be already dressed; so let us not miss the sight; for doubtless it will be a most interesting wedding."

The melancholy man let himself be dragged along by his lively chattering friend, and they soon came to the cottage. The procession was just sallying forth, to go to the church. The young countryman was in his usual linen frock; all his finery consisted in a pair of leather breeches, which he had polished till they shone like a field of dandelions; he was of simple mien, and appeared somewhat confused. The bride was sunburnt, with but a few farewell leaves of youth still hanging about her; she was coarsely and poorly, but cleanly, dressed; some red and blue silk ribbons, a good deal faded, adorned her; but what chiefly disfigured her was that her hair, stiffened with lard, flour, and pins, had been swept back from her forehead, and piled up at the top of her head in a mound, on the summit of which lay the bridal chaplet. She smiled and seemed glad at heart, but was shamefaced and downcast. Next came the aged parents: the father too was only a servant about the farm; and the hovel, the furniture, and the clothing, all bore witness that their poverty was extreme. A dirty, squinting musician followed the train, who kept grinning and screaming, and scratching his fiddle, which was patched together of wood and pasteboard, and instead of strings had three bits of pack-thread. The procession halted when his honour, their new master, came up to them. Some mischief-loving servants, some lads and girls, tittered and laughed, and jeered the bridal couple,—especially the ladies'

maids, who thought themselves far handsomer, and saw themselves infinitely better clad, and wondered how people could be so vulgar. A shuddering came over Emilius; he looked round for Roderick, but the latter had already run away from him again. An impertinent coxcomb, with a head pilloried in his high starched neckcloth, a servant to one of the visitors, eager to show his wit, pressed up to Emilius, giggling, and cried: "Now, your honour, what says your honour to this grand couple? They can neither of them guess where they are to find bread for to-morrow, and yet they mean to give a ball this afternoon, and that famous performer there is already engaged." "No bread!" said Emilius; "can such things be?" "Their wretchedness," continued the chatterbox, "is known to the whole neighbourhood; but the fellow says he bears the creature the same good-will, although she is such a sorry bit of clay. Ay, verily, as the song says, love can make black white! The couple of baggages have not even a bed, and must pass their wedding night on the straw. They have just been round to every house begging a pint of small beer, with which they mean to get drunk; a royal treat for a wedding day, your honour!" Everybody round about laughed loudly, and the unhappy, despised pair cast down their eyes. Emilius indignantly pushed the chatterer away. "Here, take this!" he cried, and threw a hundred ducats, which he had received that morning, into the hands of the amazed bridegroom. The betrothed couple and their parents wept aloud, threw themselves clumsily on their knees, and kissed his hands and the skirts of his coat. He tried to make his escape. "Let that keep hunger out of your doors as long as it lasts!" he exclaimed, quite stunned by his feelings. "Oh!" they all screamed, "oh, your honour! we shall be rich and happy till the day of our deaths, and longer too, if we live longer."

He knew not how he got away from them; but he found himself alone, and hastened with unsteady steps into the wood. Here he sought out the thickest, loneliest spot, and threw himself down on a grassy knoll, no longer keeping back the bursting stream of his tears. "I am sick of life," he sobbed; "I cannot be glad and happy; I will not. Make haste and

receive me, thou dear kind earth, and hide me in thy cool, refreshing arms from the wild beasts that tread over thee and call themselves men. Oh, God in heaven! how have I deserved that I should rest upon down and wear silk, that the grape should pour forth her most precious blood for me, and that all should throng around me and offer me their homage and love? This poor wretch is better and worthier than I; and misery is his nurse, and mockery and venomous scorn are the only sounds that hail his wedding. Every delicacy that is placed before me, every draught out of my costly goblets, my lying on soft beds, my wearing gold and rich garments, will be unto me like so many sins, now that I have beheld how the world hunts down many thousand thousand wretches, who are hungering after the dry bread that I throw away, and who never know what a good meal is. Oh, now I can fully understand your feelings, ye holy pious, whom the world despises and scorns and scoffs at, who did scatter abroad your all, even unto the raiment of your poverty, and did gird sackcloth about your loins, and did resolve as beggars to endure the gibes and the kicks wherewith brutal insolence and swilling voluptuousness drive away misery from their tables, that by so doing ye might thoroughly purge yourselves from the foul sin of wealth."

The world, with all its forms of being, hung in a mist before his eyes; he determined to look upon the destitute as his brethren, and to depart far away from the communion of the happy. They had already been waiting for him a long time in the hall, to perform the ceremony; the bride had become uneasy; her parents had gone in search of him through the garden and park: at length he returned, lighter for having wept away his cares, and the solemn knot was tied.

The company then walked from the lower hall toward the open gallery, to seat themselves at table. The bride and bridegroom led the way, and the rest followed in their train. Roderick offered his arm to a young girl who was gay and talkative. "Why does a bride always cry, and look so sad and serious during the ceremony?" said she, as they mounted the steps.

"Because it is the first moment in which she feels in-

tensely all the weight and meaning and mystery of life," answered Roderick.

"But our bride," continued the girl, "far surpasses in gravity all I have ever yet seen. Indeed, she almost always looks melancholy, and one can never catch her in a downright hearty laugh."

"This does more honour to her heart," answered Roderick himself, contrary to custom feeling somewhat seriously disposed. "You know not, perhaps, that the bride a few years ago took a lovely little orphan girl into the house, to educate her. All her time was devoted to the child, and the love of this gentle being was her sweetest reward. The girl was become seven years old, when she was lost during a walk through the town ; and, in spite of all the means that have been employed, nobody could ever find out what became of her. Our noble-minded hostess has taken this misfortune so much to heart that she has been preyed upon ever since by a silent melancholy, nor can anything win her away from her longing after her little playfellow."

"A most interesting adventure, indeed," said the lady. "One might see a whole romance in three volumes grow out of this seed. It will be a strange sight, and it will not be for nothing, when this lost star reappears. What a pretty poem it would make ! Don't you think so, sir ?"

The party arranged themselves at table. The bride and bridegroom sat in the centre, and looked out upon the gay landscape. They talked and drank healths, and the most cheerful humour reigned ; the bride's parents were quite happy ; the bridegroom alone was reserved and thoughtful, ate but little, and took no part in the conversation. He started when some musical sounds rolled down from above, but grew calm again on finding it was nothing but the soft notes of a bugle, which wandered along with a pleasant murmur over the shrubs and through the park, till they died away on the distant hills. Roderick had stationed the musicians in the gallery overhead, and Emilius was satisfied with this arrangement. Toward the end of the dinner he called his butler, and, turning to his bride, said, "My love, let poverty also have a share of our superfluities." He then ordered him to send several bottles of wine, some pastry, and

other dishes in abundant portions, to the poor couple, so that with them also this day might be a day of rejoicing, unto which in after-times they might look back with delight. "See, my friend," cried Roderick, "how beautifully all things in this world hang together. My idle trick of busying myself about other people's concerns, and my chattering, though you are for ever finding fault with them, have after all been the occasion of this good deed." Several persons began making pretty speeches to their host on his compassion and kind heart, and the young lady next to Roderick lisped about romantic feelings and sentimental magnanimity. "O, hold your tongues," cried Emilius indignantly. "This is no good action; it is no action at all; it is nothing. When swallows and linnets feed themselves with the crumbs that are thrown away from the waste of this meal, and carry them to their young ones in their nests, shall not I remember a poor brother who needs my help? If I durst follow my heart, ye would laugh and jeer at me, just as ye have laughed and jeered at many others who have gone forth into the wilderness that they might hear no more of this world and its generosity."

Everybody was silent; and Roderick, perceiving the most vehement displeasure in his friend's glowing eyes, feared he might forget himself still more in his present ungracious mood, and tried to give the conversation a sudden turn upon other subjects. But Emilius was becoming restless and absent; his eyes were continually wandering toward the upper gallery, where the servants who lived in the top storey had many things to do.

"Who is that ugly old woman," he at length asked, "that is so busy there, going backwards and forwards, in her gray cloak?" "She is one of my attendants," said his bride; "she is to overlook and manage my waiting-maids and the other girls." "How can you bear to have anything so hideous always at your elbow?" replied Emilius. "Let her alone," answered the young lady; "God meant the ugly to live as well as the handsome; and she is such a good, honest creature, she may be of great use to us."

On rising from table, everybody pressed round the new husband, again wished him joy, and urgently begged that he

would consent to their having a ball. The bride too said, breathing a gentle kiss on his forehead : "You will not deny your wife's first request, my beloved ; we have all been looking forward with delight to this moment. It is so long since I danced last, and you have never yet seen me dance. Have you no curiosity how I shall acquit myself in this new character ? My mother tells me I look better than at any other time."

"I never saw you thus cheerful," said Emilius; "I will be no disturber of your joys : do just what you please ; only let me bargain for nobody asking me to make myself ridiculous by any clumsy capers."

"Oh, if you are a bad dancer," she answered, laughing, "you may feel quite safe ; everybody will readily consent to your sitting still." The bride then retired to put on her ball-dress.

"She does not know," said Emilius to Roderick, with whom he withdrew, "that I can pass from the next room into hers through a secret door ; I will surprise her while she is dressing."

When Emilius had left them, and many of the ladies were also gone to make such changes in their attire as were necessary for the ball, Roderick took the young men aside, and led the way to his own room. "It is wearing toward evening," said he, "and will soon be dark ; so make haste, every one of you, and mask yourselves, that we may render this night glorious in the annals of merriment and madness. Give your fancies free range in choosing your characters : the wilder and uglier the better. Try every combination of shaggy mane, and squinting eye, and mouth like a gaping volcano ; build mountains upon your shoulders, or fatten yourselves into Falstaffs ; and, as a whet to your inventions, I hereby promise a kiss from the bride to the figure that would be the likeliest to make her miscarry. A wedding is such a strange event in one's life ; the bride and bridegroom are so suddenly plunged, as it were by magic, head over heels into a new, unaccustomed element, that it is impossible to infuse too much of madness and folly into this feast, in order to keep pace with the whirlpool that is bearing a brace of human beings from the state in which they were two into

the state in which they become one, and to let all things round about them be fit accompaniments for the dizzy dream on the wings of which they are floating toward a new life. So let us rave away the night, making all sail before the breeze ; and a fig for such as look twice on the grave sour faces that would have you behave rationally !"

"Don't be afraid," said the young officer ; "we have brought from town with us a large chest full of masks and mad carnival dresses, such as would make even you stare."

"But see here," returned Roderick, "what a gem I have got from my tailor, who was just going to cut up this peerless robe into strips. He bought it of an old crone, who must doubtless have worn it on gala days when she went to Lucifer's drawing-room on the Blocksberg. Look at this scarlet bodice, with its gold tassels and fringe, at this cap besmeared with the last fee the hag got from Beelzebub or his imps : it will give me a right worshipful air. To match such jewels, there is this green velvet petticoat with its saffron-coloured trimming ; and this mask would melt even Medusa to a grin. Thus accoutred I mean to lead the chorus of Graces, myself their mother-queen, toward the bedchamber. Make all the haste you can ; and we will then go in procession to fetch the bride."

The bugles were still playing ; the company were walking about the garden, or sitting before the house. The sun had gone down behind thick, murky clouds, and the country was lying in the gray dusk, when a parting gleam suddenly burst forth athwart the cloudy veil, and flooded every spot around, but especially the building, and its galleries, and pillars, and wreaths of flowers, as it were with red blood. At this moment the parents of the bride and the other spectators beheld a train of the wildest appearances move toward the upper corridor. Roderick led the way as the scarlet old woman, and was followed by humpbacks, mountain-paunches, massy wigs, clowns, punches, skeleton-like pantaloons, female figures embanked by enormous hoops and over-canopied with three feet of horsehair, powder, and pomatum, and by every disgusting shape that can be conceived, as though a nightmare were unrolling her stores.

They jumped, and twirled, and tottered, and stumbled, and straddled, and strutted, and swaggered along the gallery, and then vanished behind one of the doors. But few of the beholders had been able to laugh: so utterly were they amazed by the strange sight. Suddenly a piercing shriek burst from one of the rooms, and there rushed forth into the blood-red glow of the sunset the pale bride, in a short white frock, round which wreaths of flowers were waving, with her lovely bosom all uncovered, and her rich locks streaming through the air. As though mad, with rolling eyes and distorted face, she darted along the gallery, and, blinded by terror, could find neither door nor staircase; and immediately after rushed Emilius in chase of her, with the sparkling Turkish dagger in his high, upraised hand. Now she was at the end of the passage; she could go no further; he reached her. His masked friends and the gray old woman were running after him. But he had already furiously pierced her bosom, and cut through her white neck; her blood spouted forth into the radiance of the setting sun. The old woman had clasped round him to tear him back: he struggled with her, and hurled himself together with her over the railing; and they both fell, almost lifeless, down at the feet of the relations who had been staring in dumb horror at the bloody scene. Above and below, or hastening down the stairs and along the galleries, were seen the hideous masks, standing or running about in various clusters, like fiends of hell.

Roderick took his dying friend in his arms. He had found him in his wife's room, playing with the dagger. She was almost dressed when he entered. At the sight of the hated red bodice his memory had rekindled; the horrible vision of the night had risen upon his mind; and, gnashing his teeth, he had sprung after his trembling, flying bride, to avenge that murder and all those devilish doings. The old woman, ere she expired, confessed the crime that had been wrought; and the gladness and mirth of the whole house were suddenly changed into sorrow and lamentation and dismay.

Appended Note by De Quincey:—The author of the foregoing tale, Ludwig Tieck, has lately been introduced to the English reader by an

admirable translation of his two exquisite little novels, *The Pictures* and *The Betrothing*. He is one among the great German writers who made their appearance during the last ten years of the eighteenth century ; a period—whether from any extraordinary productiveness in the power that regulates the seed-time and the harvests of the human race, or from the mighty excitements and stimulants wherewith the world was then teeming — among the richest in the blossoming of genius. For, not to mention the great military talents first developed in those days, among the holders of which were he who conquered all the continent of Europe and he before whom that conqueror fell ; turning away from the many rank but luxuriant weeds that sprang up in France after all its plains had been manured with blood ; and fixing the eye solely upon literary excellence : we find in our own country that the chief part of those men by whom we may hope that the memory of our days will be transmitted to posterity as a thing precious and to be held in honour,—that Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Southey, and Lamb, and Landor, and Scott,—put forth during those ten years the first-fruits of their minds ; while in Germany the same period was rendered illustrious by Fichte and John Paul Richter at its commencement, and subsequently by Schelling, and Hegel, and Steffens, Schleiermacher and the Schlegels, and Novalis and Tieck. Of this noble brotherhood, who all, I believe, studied at the same university, that of Jena, and who were all bound together by friendship, by affinity of genius, and by unity of aim, the two latter, Novalis and Tieck, were the poets ; for, though there are several things of great poetical beauty in the works of the Schlegels, their fame, upon the whole, rests on a different basis. The lovely dreamy mind of Novalis was cut off in the full promise of its spring ; it only just awoke from the blissful visions of its childhood, to breathe forth a few lyrical murmurs about the mysteries it had been brooding over, and then fell asleep again. Upon Tieck, therefore, the character of German poetry in the age following that of Goethe and Schiller will mainly depend ; and never did Norwegian or Icelandic spring burst forth more suddenly than the youth of Ludwig Tieck. I know not in the whole history of literature any poet who can count up so many and so great exploits achieved on his first descent into the arena : in number and variety even Goethe must yield the precedence, though his youthful triumphs were *Goetz of Berlichingen* and *Werther*. There was in Tieck's early works the promise, and far more than the promise, of the greatest dramatic poet whom Europe had seen since the days of Calderon : there was a rich, elastic, buoyant, comic spirit, not like the analytical reflection, keen biting wit, of Molière and Congreve and other comic writers of the satirical school, but like the living merriment, the uncontrollable, exuberant joyousness, the humour arising from *good* humour, not, as it often does, from *ill* humour,—the incarnation, so to say, of the principle of mirth,—in Shakespeare, and Cervantes, and Aristophanes ; and, as a wreath of flowers to crown the whole, there was the heavenly purity and starlike loveliness of his *Genoveva*. Had the rest of Tieck's life kept pace with the fertility of the six years

from 1798 to 1804, he must have been beyond all rivalry the second of German poets ; and, as Æschylus in the *Frogs* shares his supremacy with Sophocles, so would Goethe have invited Tieck to sit beside him on his throne. Unfortunately for those who would have feasted upon his fruits, the poet, during the last twenty years, has been so weighed down by almost unintermitting ill health that he has published but little. There was a short interval indeed that seemed to bid fairer,—about the year 1812, when he began to collect his tales and lesser dramas, on a plan something like that of the *Decameron*, in the *Phantasus* ; but it has not yet been carried beyond the second series, out of seven through which it was designed to extend. Of that collection the chief part had been known to the world ten or twelve years before : some things, however, appeared then for the first time, and among them, I believe, was the tale of *The Love-Charm*. Latterly, Tieck's genius has taken a new spring, in a somewhat different direction from that of his youth. He has written half a dozen novels, in the manner of the couple recently translated ; nor are the others of less excellence than those two : a beautiful tale of magic has also been just published ; and the speedy appearance of several other works that have employed him during the long period of seeming inactivity is promised,—on one of which he has been engaged more or less for above a quarter of a century, and to gather materials for which he some years since visited England. Of this work the highest expectations may justly be formed. Not many people, even in this country, possess a more extensive and accurate acquaintance with our ancient drama than Tieck ; no one has entered more fully into the spirit of its great poets than Tieck has shown himself to have done in the prefaces to his *Old English Theatre* and his *Shakespeare's Vorschule* ; few have ever bestowed such attention on the history of the stage in all countries, or have so studied the principles of dramatic composition and the nature of dramatic effect ; hardly any one, I may say no one, ever learnt so much from Shakespeare : no one, therefore, can have more to teach us about him ; and, to judge from the remarks on some of the plays which have already been printed in the *Abendzeitung*, no one was ever so able to trace out the most secret workings of the great master's mind, or to retain his full, calm self-possession when following him in his highest flights ; no one ever united in such perfection the great critic with the great poet. One may look forward, therefore, with confidence to the greatest work in æsthetical criticism that even Germany will ever have produced.

Of the foregoing tale itself little need be said. If the translator has failed so grievously that an English reader cannot see its merits, he would hardly help himself out of the scrape by talking about the effect he ought to have produced. And grievously he must have failed if any reader with a feeling for poetry does not perceive and enjoy the beauty of the descriptions, especially of the two eventful scenes, the power and passion of the wild dithyramb, the admirable delineation of the characters in proportion to their relative importance, and the poetical harmony and perfect *keeping* of the whole. Nothing

can be more delicate than the way of softening the horror that might be felt for the bride. She has not even a name, that there may be no distinct object for our disgust to fasten on; she is only spoken of under titles of a pleasurable meaning; her beauty, like Helen's on the walls of Troy, is manifested by its effect; the young men are astonished at it; her air of deep melancholy impresses even the gayest and most thoughtless, and is thus more powerful than if pages had been employed in giving utterance to her remorse; besides which, had the latter course been adopted, the main object would have been the wicked heart, not the wicked deed, the sin, not the crime; and sin is always loathsome, whereas a crime may often be looked upon with pity. The poet has therefore wisely kept all his power of characteristic delineation for the two chief persons in the tale; and rarely have any characters been brought out so distinctly within a work of such dimensions. The contrast between them runs through every feature, yet each is the necessary complement to the other; the abuse which they vent in the ball-room each against his dearest friend, and in the ears of almost a stranger, is in the true style of our frail affections, veering before the slightest puff of self-will; nor is there a circumstance mentioned about either which tends not to complete the picture and is not all but indispensable. On some occasions a whole life and character are revealed by a single touch; as, for instance, when Emilius exclaims, *No bread! Can such things be?* No other man could have been so ignorant of what goes on in the world as to marvel at such a common occurrence; yet Emilius, it is quite certain, would be surprised, when awaked from his dreams, to behold the face of real life; so that this exclamation is, as it were, a great toe from which to construct one who is anything rather than a Hercules. Indeed the whole scene of the peasant's marriage,—which at first sight may appear like a somewhat idle digression, brought in for no better reason than amusement,—is absolutely necessary to the tale as a work of art. It not only shows the character of Emilius in a fresh and important point of view, not only supplies him with fuel, so that he is ready to burn at the approach of the first spark,—as for the former scene he had been prepared by the arousal of his feelings in the ball-room, which, besides, cast a mysterious haze over the scene, and leave it half doubtful how much of the crime was actually perpetrated: the peasant's wedding is necessary as a contrast, as a complement, and as a relief to the other marriage; nor can that calm and masterly irony which is among the first elements in the mind of a great poet be more clearly manifested than it is here, where the pomp and rejoicing of the great and wealthy are suddenly turned "into sorrow and lamentation and dismay," while the poor and the abashed and the despised are enabled to pass their days in what to them is comfort, and to obtain the enjoyment of a day "unto which in after-times they may look back with delight." Everything about the one marriage seems happy; everything about the other seems wretched; but neither is what it seems. They who seem happy are a prey to extravagant and sinful desires; those who

seem wretched have moderate wishes, and, though they have offended, have not done it wantonly or in malice ; they are making what seems to them the only atonement in their power, and "the fellow bears the creature the same good-will, though she is such a sorry bit of clay." Therefore the end of each marriage is according, not unto the outward show and promise, but unto that which lies within the heart. It is thus that Poetical justice endeavours, so far as it may, to anticipate the sentence of Omniscient justice.

END OF VOL. XII

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